THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIAL CHALLENGES TO CROATIAN POPULIST NATIONALISM

A THESIS PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

DAVID KOVAČEVIĆ

MAY 2023

Copyright © 2023 by David Kovačević. All Rights Reserved.

For my wife Arnela,
our family,
our families,
and for the blessing of family

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT v

CHAPTERS

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING 1

2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS: NEHEMIAH 12-13 AND THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIAL VOICES FROM THE 1990S CHALLENGING POPULIST NATIONALISM IN CROATIA 26

3. LITERATURE REVIEW IN THE AREA OF CROATIAN POPULIST NATIONALISM AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSES 68

4. FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT: THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIAL VOICES BY CURRENT CROATIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS CHALLENGING POPULIST NATIONALISM IN CROATIA 92

5. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION 110

REFERENCES 132

VITA 145

ABSTRACT

This work examines a following contextual issue: Croatian populist nationalism of the 1990s. The following research question is addressed: Are there theological and ecclesial voices shared by Croatian religious leaders that challenged Croatian populist nationalism of the 1990's in Croatia? The author holds that study of this issue can offer fresh perspective on the role of the Evangelical movement in Croatia and its mission. He argues that there are shared voices that challenged populist nationalism of the 1990s among relevant Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders of 1990s and today.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction, problem, and perspective

Croatia is a country geographically located in the southern part of Central Europe and the northern part of the Mediterranean. It became the 28th member of the European Union on 1 of July 2013. Evangelical Christians in Croatia are religious minority which according to the last official census from 2011 makes only 0.32%, while the dominant religious community, the Roman Catholic Church, makes 83.11% (Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, 2011). There are a number of problems that the Church of Jesus Christ faces in order to fulfill its mission. They can be global or local in its character. This work will focus on one specific contextual problem in the context of Croatia: Croatian populist nationalism during the 1990s. We can find political populism all over the globe. Here we will look at it in the Croatian context during the 1990s with the intention to understand how it can affect mission of the Church in Croatia today in the 21st century. As an evangelical Christian, I am interested in the evangelical perspective on this problem. My discourse will flow between Evangelical Christians as a religious minority in Croatia and the Roman Catholic Church as the dominant religious body in Croatia.

The fundamental question this work addresses is: Are there common theological voices among Croatian religious leaders that counter Croatian populist nationalism? This issue needs to be broken down into several elements so that we can look at it more meaningfully: populist nationalism in Croatia; understanding this problem within theories of nationalism; and the religious voices that challenge it. In the rest of the introductory chapter, I will deal with these issues. Why is populist nationalism a challenge in carrying out the Great Commission? Populist nationalism is inherently exclusive and often turned against the other

and different. It is manifested in the aspiration of certain politicians and their programs to win over the people for their goals, usually by opposing other subjects, politicians and their programs and / or other nations and ethnic groups.

What was the nature of populist nationalism in Croatia during the 1990s? The visionary of new nationalism in Croatia during the 1990s was Franjo Tuđman, the first president of the Republic of Croatia after the break-up of the Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia (hereinafter referred to as the SFRY). The time frame within which this issue develops is the beginning of the Republic of Croatia as an independent and sovereign state in 1991 after its withdrawal from the SFRY. This is the period in which Croatia moved from a communist to a democratic political system, went through terrible war, and was led by Tuđman until his death in 1998. In Croatia, this problem is manifested in different interpretations of the national narrative, known as the "centuries-old dream" for Croatian state (Bellamy, 2003, p. 32). In short, this abstract idea consists of the claim of uninterrupted millennial statehood from the establishment of the medieval independent state of Croatia in the 9th century, through the union with the Hungarians and the Habsburgs, to the severance of ties with the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918, to relations with the South Slavs in the first and second Yugoslavia in the 20th century. A more detailed description of this narrative can be found in the Croatian Constitution (Purified texts of the law, 2022). Tuđman gave his interpretation of this national narrative and his political program through which he wanted to reach all Croat's and unite them. Tuđman became the first president of Croatia since its independence from the SFRY in 1991. He presided over Croatia for two terms from 1991 to 1998. He believed that the narrative of millennial statehood gives the right to Croats to have free and independent state. He saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist system of the SFRY as an opportunity to realize his goal.

The context of Croatian populist nationalism

Overview of Croatian context from 1945 to 1990s

Before analyzing the theories of nationalism and giving the introduction to the religious situation and leaders in Croatia, we will briefly describe events preceded the period of 1990-tis that lead to rise of Croatian populist nationalism and war in Croatia. Then, we will describe the main features of Tuđman's life; present his vision of the Croatian state; highlight his policy towards the Serbs; and list the earlier and later interpretations on the thesis of "centuries-old dream" for Croatian state.

After World War II. Croatia became part of SFRY as the Federal Republic of Croatia. Throughout the existence of SFRY, there were various struggles and opinions about the organization of the common state. The country consisted of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. The discussion ranged from supporters of stronger centralization of the common state, to the strengthening of decentralization and democratization, which the Croatian and Slovenian sides were striving for. Following these tendencies, student protests in Croatia, known as the "Croatian Spring", broke out in 1972. The situation was calmed down by the adoption of the new SFRY constitution in 1974, which also had certain confederal elements. Tuđman's understanding of the national question in Yugoslavia was in line with Croatian Marxists' desire for the people's right to self-determination, while on the other hand, the Serbian Marxists, led by Simo Marković, were in favor of a unitary Yugoslavia (Tuđman, 1990, p. 425). However, after the death of the President of the SFRY Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the situation became complicated. Serbs become dissatisfied with the autonomous status of the two provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. They accused Croats of genocide and crimes in World War II. and for the discrimination of Serbs in Croatia. In 1987, Slobodan Milošević became the head of the League of Communists of Serbia and demanded greater centralization

of Yugoslavia. He was looking for the abolition of the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina and greater influence over Montenegro. This policy was opposed by Slovenia and Croatia, which demonstratively left the last session of the League of Communists in January 1990. This was followed by the first multi-party elections. In Croatia, the Croatian Democratic Union (from now on HDZ), whose founder and president was Franjo Tuđman, won elections. On May 30, the Croatian parliament was constituted and on June 25, the Croatian parliament declared separation from Yugoslavia. On December 22, the new Constitution of the Republic of Croatia was promulgated. According to it Serbs were no longer a constituent nation but rather a national minority.

The visionary of the new national movement in Croatia was Tuđman, who created a new national program whose ideology was based on the idea of the right of the Croatian people to their own state, separate from other Slavic nations (Goodwin, 2006, pp. 50-51). As a historian, Tuđman based the Croatian people's right to independency on the basis of the assertion of the uninterrupted continuity of the Croatian state for more than 1,000 years, on the basis of the thesis of the Croatian medieval state. This thesis is written into the Croatian constitution (Purified texts of the law, 2022). Tuđman was elected president of the Republic of Croatia in 1992.

In August 1990, the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) with the support of the Yugoslav People's Army organized so called SAO Krajina as an autonomous unit in Croatia and started a rebellion against the new Croatian government. On 18. Of August 1990. Serbs attacked police stations in the areas where they were the majority, and this is where armed conflicts begin. When the Croatian parliament proclaimed the act of separation from Yugoslavia on June 26, 1990, the Yugoslav People's Army tried to prevent it by using armed force. Cities like Vukovar and Dubrovnik were attacked. Vukovar was largely destroyed and conquered, and Dubrovnik shelled and remained surrounded. Since the beginning of 1992, Croatia has

experienced gradual international recognition. From May 22, it becomes a member of the United Nations.

Overview of Tuđman's life, political career, and vision for the Croatian state

Tuđman was born in 1922, in Veliko Trgovišće, northwestern Croatia. His father Stjepan was a member of the Croatian Peasant Party and an active participant in the anti-fascist struggle (Bellamy, 2003, p. 66). Due to his disagreement with the organization of the new Yugoslavia, he was murdered by the secret Yugoslav police in 1946 (Mihanović, 2022). Tuđman himself was active in the anti-fascist struggle and the partisan movement during World War II. In 1945, he received the rank of major and went to Belgrade as one of the Croatian members of the Supreme Staff of the National Liberation Army (Bellamy, 2003, p. 66). In 1960, he was promoted to the rank of general, after which he left active military service in 1961. and devoted himself to historical research (Mihanović, 2022). After leaving the army, he engaged in historical research that was under the surveillance of the Yugoslav communist authorities. In 1961. He founds the Institute for the History of the Labor Movement. Since 1963, he has been teaching at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Zagreb. He received his doctorate in 1965 at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar (2022).

Because of his historical views, he came into conflict with the socialist authorities in Yugoslavia, who accused him of emphasizing nationalism. This refers to the attitude that every nation should have its own army, that a guilt complex is being imposed on the Croatian people because of the NDH (pro fascist Croatian state during World War II.), and that the number of victims of Jasenovac are being exaggerated. Because of such views, he was arrested during the "Croatian Spring" in 1971, when the student movement demanded greater rights for the republics and federalization. He was sentenced to two years but was released earlier on parole due to the intervention of Miroslav Krleža who was Croatian writer,

president of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia during the World War II., and friend of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito (2022). During the 1980s, Tuđman was imprisoned several times because of his confederal views regarding the organization of Yugoslavia and his vision of a state within which the republics and the peoples within them should have greater autonomy. When he was released from prison, he used the opportunity to visit the Croatian diaspora and emigration and spread his ideas about the unification of all Croats and their ideological and political options (Bellamy, 2003, p. 66).

The year 1989 was a turning point and an opportunity. There are years that are marked in human collective memory as turning points on the political and social level. For example, the end of the first and second world wars, or the years 1918 and 1945. Thus, the year 1989 stands as the year when the bipolar world order came to an end. This is the year when democratic changes took place in Yugoslavia (Knežević & Godić, 2021, pp. 9-40). In 1989, pluralism was allowed in Yugoslavia. Tuđman used this to present his program and organize the founding session of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), where he was elected as first president (Mihanović, 2022). In independent Croatia, he was elected president of Croatia two times: in 1992 and 1997 (Mihanović, 2022).

Tuđman's idea of building a Croatian identity and state was firstly based on uniting and reconciling all strata of Croatian nation. In order to achieve this, he sought to include political center, left, but also the far-right political spectrum. He did not see problematic promoting together different historical figures who had totally different political ideologies and visions. For example, Ljudevit Gaj and Josip Juraj Strossmayer, known as "Illyrians", who were pan-Slavists; the pacifist Stjepan Radić who promoted trialism within the Habsburg monarchy; Ante Starčević who hold anti-clericalism and civil republicanism, and Ante Pavelić who was a fascist. He emphasize that they all shared the millennial desire of Croatian people for their own state. In order to unite the Croatian left and right, he had to relativize

certain historical circumstances. He wrote about these processes in his book *Historical Wastelands*, which was reprinted in 1997 as *Horrors of War* (Tuđman, 1997).

Alex Bellamy locates six problematic topics related to Tuđman's political program and vision of the Croatian state and identity: Unite all Croats as victims of the Serbian conspiracy; claim that the NDH was a legitimate expression of Croatian statehood; unification with the Croatian emigration (which escaped the fall of NDH) so that their homeland became as close as possible to their worldview through various actions; Croatian sovereignty and independence; specific approach to citizenship; and the promotion of clericalism. Each of these elements is problematic in its own way. Let just mention Tuđman's efforts to build Croatian identity in emphasizing the differences between the Croatian and Serbian people and promotion of clericalism (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 68-71). Bellamy described this in following way:

> Franjoism held that the extremes of Croatian political ideology - from fascism to communism - could be represented and expressed in the person of Franjo Tuđman. Tuđman argued that the transition from a communist system to independent and democratic statehood could only be achieved if these cleavages were bridged. The program of 'national reconciliation' involved instigating co-operation between first generation descendants of Partisan and Ustaša supporters. Tuđman believed that he could personally bridge the gap between the fascists and communists. Not only did 'Franjoism' include a commitment to unite the 'bright and dark chapters of Croatia's past' it also sought to bring Croats living in Croatia together with those living abroad. (p. 67)

In order to tie them together, he needed to form a unifying narrative that would look back on the "centuries-old dream of Croatian statehood" claiming that even politicians of different ideological spectra had the same dream even they had different visions of how

Croatian state should be organized (pp. 67-68). The basic question in my work is how religious leaders in Croatia reacted to such political program and its popularization among the Croatian people during the 1990s. That is, are there common voices between Roman catholic and Evangelical leaders that challenge such political program? We will deal with this issue in more details in chapters two and four.

We will now try to explain Tuđman's policy towards the Serbs. Namely, he tried to unite the Croats by setting them against "others" - Serbs. According to him, Croats differed from Serbs in terms of culture, history and geography (pp. 68-69). He explained it in this way:

> Croats belong to a different culture - a different civilization from the Serbs. Croats are part of Western Europe, part of the Mediterranean tradition. Long before Shakespeare and Moliere, our writers were translated into European languages. The Serbs belong to the East. They are Eastern peoples like the Turks and Albanians. They belong to the Byzantine culture ... despite similarities in language we cannot be together. (Cohen, 1995, p. 211).

In his book *Horrors of War*, Tuđman pointed out the differences that exist in the national being between Croats and Serbs, in contrast to Đuretić's position that there is a kind of ethnic kinship between Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which was manifested by the creation of the Kingdom of SHS after the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy (Tuđman, 1990, pp. 425-426). If there is a difference between Serbian and Montenegrin ethnic being, how much greater is one between Croat and Serbs, Tuđman claimed. According to him, Croatia belongs to the Western European circle of civilization, inheriting the values of the Habsburg Monarchy such as: high culture, economic development, civilized society, parliamentary democracy and political freedom (p. 426).

He described the supervision of the Serbian army in the Kingdom of SHS (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians) as a cruel autocracy with exemplary "Balkan methods of torture" that were not known in Croatia during the period of Habsburg Monarchy (p. 427). He saw the difference between Croatian and Serbian ethnic being in opposing political ideas and visions of a common state. In the joint state of the Kingdom of SHS Croats dreamed of the community where they would have greater political and national freedom, following the political program of the HSS (Croatian peasant party) of Stjepan Radić who dreamed of a Croatian Republic within that community. Serbs, on the other hand, in the Kingdom of SHS saw the realization of Greater Serbian hegemony or a common state where all Serbs will live under the Serbian dynasty of Karađorđević, quoting Vuk Drašković from his writing "What's the Herald Cooking" (pp. 425-431). According to Tuđman, the idea of Greater Serbia was in direct opposition to the national survival of other nations in a common state and therefore could not succeed (pp. 431-432).

Further on, Tuđman insisted that the NDH (pro fascist Croatian state during World War II.) was an expression of the desire of the Croatian people for an independent state, even what emerged from it was illegitimate. He changed the names of the streets from communist figures to proto-Croatian so that Croats from the diaspora would feel welcomed (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 70-71). Tuđman claimed that the Serbs magnified the crimes committed by the NDH (a pro-fascist para-state on the territory of Croatia in the II. World War) in the Jasenovac war camp (Tuđman, 1990, p. 10). He says that the victims from the Jasenovac camp were manipulated in order to distort the history of the Croatian nation (p. 12). Tuđman believed that the camp in Jasenovac was used to deal with any raising of Croatian consciousness, which would be to the detriment of Yugoslav unity. He cites Velimir Terzin as the main representative of these views (p. 15). He saw in such conflicts how the aspirations of the Croatian people were directly opposed to the Serbian view on the "Serbian tragedy" and

"the great Serbian hegemony" within Yugoslavia (p. 15). Tuđman was aware of how the Yugoslav leadership viewed him for questioning the number of Jasenovac victims. They saw him as a counter-revolutionary, a Croatian nationalist, a separatist, a supporter of fascist and Ustasha emigration. He considered these labels without coverage, because according to him, they labeled him, but none of them tackled his scientific research (p. 13).

Tuđman also had exclusivist approach to citizenship in Croatia. Observing the text of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, especially Article 1, we cannot say that there was discrimination against other ethnic groups. The Constitution says that power comes from the people, and the people consist not only of the constituent Croatian people, but also of national minorities that include, for example, Serbs, Slovenes, Muslims, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Jews and others. Bellamy claims that such a fact was present not because it reflected Tuđman's understanding, but on the other hand, he believed that the Croatian state was intimately connected to the Croatian people. He did this in order not to be condemned by the international community. For this reason, Bellamy believes, the Croatian government promulgated such a law on the citizenship of the Republic of Croatia that could be interpreted in two ways, depending on whether it was a Croat or a Serb (2003, pp. 71-73). Bellamy says that UN reporter Elisabeth Rehn in 1997 found that Article 8 of the citizenship law, which requires 5 years of residence and fluency in language and writing to obtain citizenship, was used to discriminate against citizens of Serbian nationality and deny them citizenship status. It is similar with Article 26 (as cited in Bellamy, 2003, p. 73). Similarly, the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in 1995 established that the law was used to deny citizenship to citizens of Serbian nationality who were not born in Croatia and who did not have Croatian parents (as cited in Bellamy, 2003, p. 73). Bellamy's conclusion is that although the Constitution guaranteed the equality of citizens of all nationalities, the law was shaped in such a way that it saw the Croatian state as a manifestation of the Croatian ethnic nation. This

reveals Tuđman's interpretation of the thesis of the centuries-old dream for Croatian state in the context of the interpretation of the Croatian state as a manifestation of the Croatian ethnic community, and not a nation constituted by the state (2003, pp. 72-73).

Keeping this conclusion in mind, we will compare it with Janko Bekić's thesis on Tuđman's vision of the Croatian state and the construction of Croatian identity in the 1990s. He tries to look objectively at Tuđman's approach to the development of the Croatian state regarding the context in which Tuđman found himself. More precisely, Tuđman modified his views between the vision of the Croatian state as civil to ethnocentric as the situation on the ground developed. Tuđman firstly had a vision of the Croatia as a civic state. This is vivid for example in Tuđman's speech at the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia in 1990. As Croatia became threatened by the armed rebellion of the Serbian population in Croatia, Tuđman began to change his attitudes towards ethnocentrism (Bekić, 2016, pp. 27-29). This is also evident, for example, in Jakov Žižić's article "Franjo Tuđman, Christian Democracy and Croatian Democratic Community" where Žižić initially sees Tuđman and the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Community) as an open platform for the unification of different worldviews. However, after the situation has become more severe and Tuđman realize that he will not succeed in uniting the different political and ideological spectrums in Croatia, he leans towards the Christian Democratic ideology orientation. This became evident by changing the HDZ program at the party congress in 1993, when the party took Christian Democratic elements (Žižić, 2020, p. 488).

Vladimir Šeks, who was Tuđman's right-hand and who in 1989 and 1990 was elected as vice-president of the HDZ, explains Tuđman's attitudes towards the Church and its role in preserving the Croatian identity. Tuđman sees the Roman Catholic Church as one of the key factors that contributed to the victory of his policy. Šeks quotes Tuđman:

> I was in favor of placing ‘the principles of Christian civilization’ in our program so that we can connect with Christian-democratic orientations. It is the majority of the Croatian people after all. This is what polls are showing. We are relying on the Church as significant social strata. Two-thirds of the Croatian people are connected to the Church, to religion, etc. Therefore, our orientation was correct and with that we won. (Šeks, 2017, pp. 382-383)

Žižić concludes that Tuđman's understanding of contemporary Democratic Christianity was not the clearest but was characterized by a post-communist and clerical context. Žižić wrote:

> Tuđman's emphasis that the HDZ does not want "to be any, at least clerical party" nor does it want to turn into "some kind of narrow Christian Democratic Party" show that his understanding of Christian democracy was quite rudimentary and much closer to the confessional than to the contemporary Christian democracy. Such an understanding was characteristic for post-communist states in Europe, where Christian Democratic parties were identified with clericalism and the positions of the Church in terms of public policies, not with a broad Christian conservative social values and explicitly non-clerical and non-nationalist requirements. In these countries Christian Democratic orientation implied a specific and narrow electorate, connected the party with the Church and implied pro-clerical doctrine. (2020, p. 489).

Other perspectives on the Croatian state

Earlier interpretations of the centuries-old dream for the state

Tuđman's vision for creating Croatian state and building it on thousand-year old dream for Croatian state was not the only one. There were earlier interpretations from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and later on in 1990s during Tuđman's activism. Basically, there were three key movements that at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century defined their political programs and what the Croatian state should look like. It is important to note that all three movements considered the thesis of the centuries old dream for Croatian statehood.

First example is Illyrian movement firstly led by Ljudevit Gaj, who was mainly active in the literary and cultural field, and later by J. J. Strossmayer, a Roman Catholic bishop, who became politically active. Building on the thesis of centuries-old statehood, Strossmayer envisioned a common state of the southern Slavs, calling it Yugoslavia, which would be organized outside the Habsburg Monarchy. He built on Gaj's efforts about the common language of the South Slavs. His main challenge was the unification of Croats and Serbs. He believed that he could achieve this through the rapprochement of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. This idea was not very well received by the Serbian elite, that imagined the Serbian state differently (Bellamy, 2003, p. 44).

Another example is the Croatian Party of Rights which was led by Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik. Their idea was that Croatia has the right to its own state, considering the thesis of the centuries-old dream for the state, and that they can organize state under the Habsburg emperor. They wanted to unite Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria, Dubrovnik and Bosnia. Bellamy sees as problematic their thesis that the Orthodox in Bosnia are not necessary Serbs but can rather be Orthodox Christians in general belonging to different ethnic groups.

Similar view he had for Muslims in Bosnia (pp. 44-47). Bellamy might be right if Orthodox Christians in Bosnia will be forbidden to declare themselves Serbs. However, on the other hand, there is truth in the statement that Orthodox Christians in Bosnia have right to express themselves as members of other ethnic groups. It is dangerous to identify one ethnic group with a certain religion or vice versa. That would be as saying that evangelical believers cannot be Croat just because they are not Catholic, or that they cannot declare themselves as members of other ethnic groups.

The third significant option is one lead by Stjepan Radić and the Croatian Peasant Party. He built the right to Croatian statehood based on the thesis of centuries-old statehood. His idea was a Croatian state within the Habsburg Monarchy that would include Slovenes and Serbs living within the Monarchy. Those who live outside would organize their lives as they wish (pp. 44-47). It is interesting to me that all three visions see the Croatian state as a multi-ethnic, even multi-religious state.

Modern interpretations of the centuries-old dream for the state

At the beginning of the 1990s, different political options emerged with their own visions of how the Croatian state should be organized. Those other parties did not have the strength and logistics of the HDZ and were quite fragmented. Nevertheless, they had their own specific interpretations of the thesis of the centuries-old Croatian statehood.

There was modern Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) lead by Dobroslav Paraga. HSP relied on the thesis of centuries-old statehood with the claim that the Croatian people have an inalienable right to a state precisely because of its history. Interestingly, unlike the HDZ, the HSP did not rely much on the issues of religion and nation. It held that Croats are a political nation, and that all people within Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina should live in one state, regardless of ethnicity or religion. Serbs in Bosnia are Croats of the Orthodox faith, just

as Bosniaks are Croats of the Muslim faith. While Tuđman could be described more as a primordialist, HSP and Paraga can be interpreted more as a modernist or a kind of ethnosymbolist (Bellamy, 2003, p. 77). Next one are the Social Democrats (SDP) lead by Ivica Račan. SDP emphasized the multi-ethnic character of the Croatian state. They hold a pluralistic, civil and liberal worldview. During the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, they encouraged a peaceful transition from the communism to the democratic system and the confederal union within Yugoslavia (pp. 79-80). That approach would be a kind of modernist and civil. Croatian Socially Liberal Party (HSLS) was lead by Dražen Budiša. They saw the nation in liberal terms as distinct groups of individuals. The Croatian state should lead a policy for Croats in Croatia, not outside it in Bosnia or Serbia. On the other hand, as the Croatian party, they condemned Serbian aggression on Croatian territory and encouraged the integration of those parts into the Croatian state (pp. 80-81). Liberal Party (LS) was lead by Vlado Gotovac. The liberal party fought for the individual freedoms of the individual without interference of the state authorities in his personal freedoms (p. 82). Also there was Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS). They advocated the decentralization of the state and the strengthening of local authorities. Their nationalism was Radić's anti-clericalism and civil republicanism (p. 83). In the end there was one regional party of peninsula Istria: Istrian Democratic Party (IDS). It was one of the strongest opposition to Tuđman and HDZ. Ideologically, they were close to the liberal way of thinking. They where for a multi-ethnic country which will give its regions more freedom in organizing themselves. They were a problem because they were a larger group of Croats who claimed that they had a special history and that they had the right to self-determination (pp. 83-84).

From this review of different visions of the Croatian state, it is evident that before, as well as during Tuđman's activism in the 1990s, there were different points of view and visions of the Croatian state and the construction of the Croatian identity. Although most of these

visions build their program on the thesis of the "centuries-old dream for Croatian state", they have a different perspective on how the Croatian state should be organized. It is evident that these visions were either multi-ethnic or multi-religious. We just mentioned Strossmaier's multi-ethnicity expressed through pan-Slavism, or Radić's multi-ethnicity within the Habsburg Monarchy, or Starčević's multi-religious state. The parties that were active during Tuđman's activism followed a similar direction. From the right such as HSP, which believed that Croatian state will be state of all citizens regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation, to the pluralist SDP and left-liberal options such as HSLS and LS, and civil options such as HSS, or regional such as IDS.

Basis for the study: The nationalism as subject of scientific study

We can better understand processes of populist nationalism in Croatia bearing in mind different theories of nationalism. By pointing to various theories of nationalism we can better understand the processes by which Tuđman sought to popularize his vision of Croatian national identity and the Croatian state. When we talk about theories of nationalism, we enter a complex scientific field where we have numerous discussions and hypotheses. Basic theories within the science of nationalism can be divided into modernism, primordialism, and ethno-symbolism. These are all complex theories, but for our discussion here let’s give brief and concise definitions.

The basic premise of modernism is that nations are a product of modern times when the special conditions for nation-building have been created, and which, according to their context, have been used by certain political elites to gain mass for their political programs (Gellner, 1983, p. 36). Nations are therefore, according to this approach, a product of modern times and we should not load their elements into earlier pre-modern collectivist identities, nor look for historical links between modern nations and ancient collectivist ethnic groups, especially not in a genetic sense. Modern nations are a product of social and political

development that political elites have directed toward the development of national identities (Smith, 2003, pp. 18-19).

The basic premise of primordialism is that today's nations have connections with certain ethnic groups based on physical and genealogical connections. Nations are the basic communities of history that have their origins in the very origin of humanity (Geertz, 1963, pp. 109-111). A nationality is not something we choose freely; it is given to us by birth. Nations can be distinguished by their cultural and genetic determinants. What has happened throughout history is that some nations have lost their national self-consciousness as they lost their independence. It is therefore the task of nationalists to awaken this consciousness and revive their nations (Smith, 2003, pp. 18-19).

Ethno symbolism, in general, assumes that nations have their roots in ancient ethnic communities, which may have been forgotten through the centuries, but have been awakened in modern times, not because of certain kin or genetic ties, but through the awakening of their "myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols". Ethno symbolists believe that ethnic groups played a far greater role in the ancient world than modernists admit to them. Yet they do not believe, as primordialists do, that today's nations necessarily have kinship or genetic ties to ancient ethnic communities (p. 191).

Primordialism sees direct links between ancient ethnic groups and today's nations. It often sees these links as primordial or biological. Modernism completely rejects the ties of modern nations and ancient ethnic communities and argues that modern nations are the result of modern times and the conditions that arose at that time. Ethno symbolism recognizes the connection between ancient ethnic communities and modern nations with respect to the invocation of modern nations to the myths, memories, values, traditions, and symbols of ancient ethnic communities. But together with modernism it does not identify them with modern nations. They may or may not have other connections.

How to understand populist nationalism in Croatia in the light of different theories of nationalism? We will consider the work of Alex Belamy who wrote a significant work that analyses the narrative of the centuries-old dream for the Croatian state and the formation of Croatian identity in the 1990s. He analyzes in detail the political program of Tuđman and the reaction of various strata of society to his political program in the 1990s. Among other things, he analyzes the reaction of Roman Catholic leaders to his program. As such, it will be one of our important dialogue partners in this work (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 1-6). Bellamy bases his analysis of Croatian identity in the light of Paul James theory of abstract communities. James places the nation on several social levels through three key questions: How do people become national? How is the nation symbolized? How can we understand the intersection of the nation with other social operators (James, 1997, pp. 157-161)? Bellamy will apply this methodology in his work by applying these questions to Croatian identity and statehood. What does it mean to be a Croat? Although there are politicians and political parties that interpret the thousand-year-old dream of statehood and Croatian identity different than Tuđman (for example, Ivo Banac and Slavenka Drakulić), most agree that people become Croats by sharing the same history and state (Bellamy, 2003, p. 5).

How is Croatian identity expressed in contemporary symbols and rhetoric? Through his political program and rhetoric Tuđman himself sought to give his "abstract interpretation of Croatian history" and combine it with public action to point out what it means to be a "good Croat" and how Croatian identity is expressed. The extent to which he managed to impose his interpretation and unite the Croatian people remains the subject of debate (pp. 5-6). How the question of the nation intertwines with various social factors in society? In response to the third question, he analyzes the way in which certain interpretations of Croatian identity become internalized within various social factors. He deals with six different social factor: the national economy, football, the region of Istria, education, the Roman Catholic

Church and the Croatian language. For us, interesting will be to analyze process of internalizing populist nationalism of Tuđman in relation to the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia (pp. 5-6). While we try to understand the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia with regard to popular nationalism in the context of the 1990s, the relevant work in this context is also the work of Julija Barunčić Pletikosić: *The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991 -1995: Attitudes, Action and suffering*; as well as her article *Attitudes and Activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia during 1995* (during and after the Croatian liberation operations "Flash" and "Storm"). In these works, the author researched the position of Cardinal Kuharić, the Croatian Bishops' Conference, and individual priests on this issue (Barunčić, 2015, p. 89).

The ministry setting within which the issue will be addressed

Why is Tuđman's populist nationalism a challenge in carrying out the Great Commission in Croatia? Because it is inherently exclusive and builds its theses by confronting others and the different. Populist nationalism in Croatia creates a serious problem in carrying out the Great Commission because of its nature and the way it defines religion and its relationship toward particular people group. Specifically, Tuđman viewed the Roman Catholic Church as an institution that had a special place in preserving Croatian identity during the SFRY, and therefore believed that it should have a special place in a free and independent state of Croatia and in the construction of Croatian identity. For Tuđman Roman Catholic Church had a special place in what it means to be Croat. This attitude toward the Roman Catholic Church put other religious communities in an unequal position. That become especially evident with the conclusion of an Agreement with the Holy See in 1996. Croatian Government made agreement with other religious communities only after Tuđman's death. Three Agreements between the Holy See and the Republic of Croatia were signed in Zagreb on 19 of December 1996: one on legal issues, another on co-operation in education and

culture, and a third on pastoral care of Catholic believers, members of the armed forces and police. The Croatian Parliament ratified the Agreement on Legal Affairs on 7 of February 1997, and the other two on 25 of February 1997. It is interesting to note that the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Evangelical Churches in Croatia was concluded on December 15, 2003., not only after Tuđman died, but also after his party HDZ lost the elections. That was a time when the left-wing coalition was in power. So Tuđman's populist narrative is a challenge for Evangelical communities in carrying out the Great Commission in Croatia because it favors one religious' community at the expense of others and thus degrades others and puts them in an unequal position.

Not much has been written about the history of Evangelical movement in Croatia. However, we can read the basic features of the history and activities of the movement in Stanko Jambrek's: *Churches of the Reformation Heritage in Croatia* (Jambrek, 2003), and in the booklet *Evangelical Movement in Croatia* (Jambrek, 1997). There we learn that the movement first appeared in the late 19th century by Baptist missionaries. Then, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Pentecostal movement developed in this area, first among German Lutheran and Reformed believers, and later among Croats, especially when converts from the USA witnessed to their relatives in Croatia. Today, four denominations are part of the Evangelical Alliance in Croatia (hereinafter referred to as the PEV which in Croatian means The Protestant Evangelical Council): the Baptist Union, the Evangelical Pentecostal Church, the Church of Christ, and the Church of God. PEV was formed on May 15, 1992, as a successive body to a similar in the SFRY (Association of Evangelical Religious Ministers in SFRJ). At that time, the founding committee, and the first president of PEV in Croatia, Dr. Peter Kuzmič, was elected. Kuzmič chaired this body for three terms from 1991. to 2000. PEV drafted a new statute in accordance with the new socio-political and religious situation in the Republic of Croatia. It has become an advisory body that aims to bring together

evangelical churches in Croatia. In the middle of the war, PEV became involved in social issues, especially those related to religious rights. For example, on November 20, 1992, a letter was sent to the Office of the President Tuđman regarding the draft on the legal status of religious communities. The letter was intended to encourage the President's Office to consider the need for greater freedoms of various religious communities in the recently internationally recognized Republic of Croatia. Less than two years later, in May 1994, the PEV held its first Council with the title *Time for Peace and Hope*. PEV spoke about current political issues, welcomed the efforts to end the war and return refugees to their homes. It worked to improve the State's attitude towards evangelical churches (Protestant Evangelical Council in the Republic of Croatia, 2022).

There are only a few works that try to understand the context of Evangelical Christianity in Croatia and give an analysis of why Evangelical Christianity has not grown significantly in this area to this day. For example, one of such work is from Eric Maroney *Crisis, Change and Conversion: Forty Years of Conversion among Croatian Baptists* (Maroney, 2016). This thesis aims to help shed light on the attitudes of Evangelical communities towards building society in Croatia and recognizing that they are not a threat to Croatian identity and statehood. Together with the Roman Catholic Church and other religious communities it can be a good social partner and contribute to a positive social climate in Croatia. True, the views of evangelical communities are likely to be opposed to the populist nationalism of the 1990s, but in that they are unlikely to differ from those of the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, where it differs, they can be complementary and contribute to the positive atmosphere of Croatian society, pluralism, and democratization. Such an analysis of this issue can be helpful to evangelical movement and pastors in Croatia in imagining the role of evangelical churches in Croatia and carrying out the Great Commission.

Stating the Hypothesis

Given the nature of populist nationalism in Croatia in the early 1990s, I assume that we will be able to identify different common voices among Roman Catholic and Evangelical religious leaders that challenged Croatian populist nationalism during 1990's. I anticipate that a common argument will be made against linking religious and national identity. I make this assumption considering Roman Catholic doctrine regarding the Church's universality, whereas evangelical writers are likely to see such a mindset as a hindrance to a positive approach in carrying out the Grate Commission. I will test my hypothesis by examine text resources by prominent Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders from 1990's. After that I will interview prominent and current religious leaders today in Croatia on both sides and compare outcomes.

Method and the religious voices that challenged populist nationalism

The methodological approach in this work is fundamentally theological, but it also includes a historical and sociological note in accordance with the nature of main research question of this work. As I stated above, we will have text-based and ministry / church-based examination of Croatian Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders and their role in challenging populist nationalist ideology. We will first analyze the written material we have at disposal, which testifies to the attitudes of Croatian Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders during the 1990s regarding populist nationalism in Croatia.

One of significant roman catholic leader during this period was Cardinal Franjo Kuharić. Pope John Paul II ordained him a cardinal in 1983. He served as a cardinal during the sensitive period of Croatia's transition from the communist system to democracy and during the period of Croatia becoming the independent from the SFRY. In principle, he supported Croatia's independence and defense against Serbian military aggression but called

on Croatian authorities to adhere to moral principles (Kuharić, 1996, p. 169). He hosted Pope John Paul II. for his visit to Croatia in 1994. He retired in 1997 and died on March 11, 2002. The contemporary Croatian expert that analyzed Kuharić's work and thought is Miroslav Akmadža. His capital work on this topic is *Franjo Kuharić Cardinal and Authority,* which was published in 2020. This work is significant because in it he analyzes Roman Catholic documents in Croatia, the files of the Secret Service of SFRY (Social Federative Republic of Yugoslavia), and the private diary of Cardinal Kuharić (Akmadža, 2020).

The next Roman Catholic leader and author from the 1990s that we would bring here is Bishop Antun Škvorčević. He is significant because of his ecumenical activities and relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church. He is a member of the Croatian Episcopal Commision for dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox Church. He received his doctorate in 1981 at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Pope John Paul II. in 1997, appointed him the first bishop of the newly founded Diocese of Požega. Škvorčević is important because he writes about the activities of Cardinal Kuharić during the 1990s and war in Croatia. Namely, in the monography of Živković, I, (1996), *Wounded Church in Croatia*, he wrote the article about the Peacemaking and ecumenical efforts of church leaders during the Homeland War, where he mainly describes the actions of Cardinal Kuharić during the war (Škvorčević, 1996).

Živko Kustić is another leader. He was the director of the IKA (Informative Catholic Agency) in 1995. He recognized numerous discriminatory tendencies and activities in society and was writing about them (Kustić, 1995).

Peter Kuzmič stands out as one of the evangelical leaders in Croatia throughout the 1990s. From 1991 to 2000, he served as the PEV's president. During that period, he visited Tuđman personally. In his article *What Did I Tell Tuđman?* Kuzmič writes about what he told President Tuđman for the 1996 New Year celebration. From this article we can understand

how Kuzmič imagined the evangelical contribution to Croatian society. One of Kuzmič's theses is that evangelical Christians serve as a bridge between Croatia and the West. Through their world view and connections, they contribute to Croatian pluralism (Kuzmič, 2017, p. 13). He released a compilation of articles during the 1990s that appeared in daily publications. He offered commentary on daily political developments in Croatia for many years. In this way, Kuzmič served as both a witness and an important voice for the evangelical movement during the early days of the Croatian state's formation and Tuđman's attempts to popularize his vision of the Croatian state and identity.

One of the evangelical leaders who theologically considered and wrote on Christian faith and nationalism at this period was Miroslav Volf. As a result of a scientific conference that PEV hosted to mark the 150th anniversary of the Evangelical Alliance, he wrote the article *Christian Faith and Nationality* in 1997, which was then included in the monograph *Evangelical Movement*. He is well known for his book *Exclusion And Embrace: A Theological Exploration Of Identity, Otherness And Reconciliation* (Volf, 1996). This work is significant because Volf considered how we, as Christians, might uphold the message of Jesus Christ and his cross in the face of injustice, violence, and prejudice against those who are different from us. Next important work of Volf that we will consider for this thesis is *Public faith*. In this book, he elaborates on proper Christian engagement in politics and society in the context of a pluralistic environment.

Finally, using the interviewing technique, we will compare the attitudes of Croatian Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders in parishes and churches today with those expressed in earlier authors' written works and essays. Our goal is to compare these voices and answer the question are there common voices challenging populist nationalism in Croatia. We will also take works of Alex Bellamy (2003*, The formation of Croatian national identity*) and Julija Barunčić Pletikosić (2014, *The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War*

1991 - 1995: Attitudes, Action, and Suffering) as important dialogue partners in understanding Croatian populist nationalism and religious responses to it. Also, we will analyze relevant biblical texts from Nehemiah 12-13 to get biblical paradigm on national formation and identity markers.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS: NEHEMIAH 12-13 AND THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIAL VOICES FROM THE 1990S CHALLENGING POPULIST NATIONALISM IN CROATIA

Biblical foundation for research

In the second chapter, I'll tackle the subject of how the biblical text and theological voices shed light on our research question: Are there common religious voices that challenge Croatian populist nationalism? I'll establish biblical foundation in the first section from two angles. Firstly, I'll start by providing a brief review of the concept of nation in the Bible. We will keep in mind that biblical terminology differs from how the terms nation or nation-states are understood due to the influence of modern times and it social circumstances. Secondly, I'll analyze the biblical texts that can paradigmatically shed light on my study subject. I'll focus on the analysis of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which I consider being one literary unite (Wuench, 2021, p. 1), especially following two passages in Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3 and 13:4-31. These passages include subjects like rebirth and development of individuals and communities, interactions with the authorities, and they provide illustrations of the roles played by religious leaders in these processes. In this way we can observe the processes that occurred among the Croatian people throughout the 1990s, the way Tuđman sought to create the Croatian state and national identity, and the way how Croatian religious leaders responded to these processes, through the lens of biblical paradigm.

Etymological analysis of biblical terms referring to different collectivist identities

Before giving a brief overview of the way the Bible describes various forms of human collectivistic groups and their social organization, it is important to point out that there is a difference between the biblical – Ancient Middle East view of these different collectivistic

communities and the modern use of the term nation or nation state. For example Liverani warns that biblical terminology for nations should not be equated with the modern emergence of the nation-states in the 18th and 19th centuries. Modern terms such as "nation" and "nationalisms" have their peculiarities that we do not necessarily find in the ancient times of the Middle East. We can hardly say that ancient Israel was a nation in the modern sense of the word (Liverani 1992, p. 1031). Liverani describes the history of the emergence of the modern nation-states as a result of modern processes such as the Declaration of the Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1791 that resulted in the separation of peoples from monarchy and the proclamation of nation-states and ethnic states with their borders (p. 1031). Feinstein points out that modern nation state has its roots even in the Peace of Westphalia in the year 1648, where the idea that territories can be governed without external interference was articulated (Feinstein, p. 2021).

From our analysis of the theories of nationalism, we have seen that even in the scientific study of nationalism itself, there is no consensus on the very genesis of nations. Are they merely the product of modern times as Liverini and the modernist approach together with Gellner say (1983, p. 36)? Or do they have direct genealogical connections with primordial ethnic groups from ancient times as claimed by primordialism and authors such as Geertz (1963, pp. 109-111)? Or are today’s nations and nation-states related to different ancient ethnic groups not necessarily genealogically but through identification with same symbols, myths, and stories as ethno-symbolism and Smith claims (Smith, 2003, pp. 18-19)? However, there is definitively a difference between today's nations and nation-states and collectivist communities as described in the Bible. Brubaker et al. in 1996 says that the nation state is a sovereign way of governing on behalf of a community of citizens who identify themselves as a particular nation, usually through a government institution, certain laws and on territory. Legitimacy for a such governing comes from the modern understanding that every nation has

the right to self-determination, its state, territory, and homeland (as cited in Feinstein, 2021). This is quite different from the earlier legitimacies of governing authority, such as dynastic monarchies, theocratic administrations, and others. Before modern times we had different expressions of that such as city-states to empires, from monarchies to the feudal system where a sovereign lord owned land and people. People in an ancient time could be called nations, but it is important to know the difference to avoid anachronisms with modern nations (Liverani 1992, p. 1031).

Old Testament perspective on different collectivist identities

By examining several biblical concepts, we will now attempt to provide a broad overview of the biblical approach to various collectivist identities and groups. We'll start by looking at several collectivist identities from an Old Testament perspective. Block states that the etymology of the nations in the Old Testament is found in the following four terms: עַם, read: am (e.g. Judges 20: 2); גּוֹי, read: goy (e.g. Isaiah 34: 1a); לְאֻם, read: leom (e.g. Isaiah 34: 1b); and עַם, read: umm (e.g. Psalm 117: 1). The first term עַם refers to kinship such as relations as father, brother, male relatives, male members of the tribe, all members of society, but also to all members of nation including women and children. The second term גּוֹי is used generally for a nation or generally for others in terms of pagan nations. We have this term in the list of nations in Genesis 10; in relation to the Canaanite tribes in Deuteronomy 7:1; Bedouin tribes in Isaiah 60:5; city-state in 2 Kings 19:13; for Israel as united tribes, and the great imperial powers like Egypt and Babylon in Jeremiah 25:17. The terms לְאֻם, read: leom, and עַם, read umm are mostly archaic and are commonly used in combination with גּוֹי (Block 1986, p. 492). Christensen focus on three terms: גּוֹי, עַם and לְאֻם. According to him, these terms are used interchangeably in the Old Testament referring to nations in general or for specific nation in singular including Israel (1992, p. 1037). עַם can also be translated as clan (p. 1037). The basic meaning of the word is kinship that is foundation of group connection

(Hamlin 1991, p. 515). In LXX, the word עַם is translated in Greek as “ethne” and “laoi”. In the singular, the word עַם is usually used for Israel as "the people of Yahweh" and is then referred in the LXX as "laoi." In the plural word עַם, read: ammim, is referred in the LXX as "ethne" and used for nations in plural. גּוֹי can be translated as group. In LXX in Greek it is translated as “ethne” or nation. It does not refer to kinship. It refers to social or political ties. The meaning of the word לְאֻם is literary thousands. The word referred to a city that could produce a contingent of 1,000 soldiers. LXX translates this term as “ethne”. The word is used as a synonym in prophetic literature and psalms (Christensen 1992, p. 1037).

In addition to etymology, Block theologically analyzes the biblical approach to nations. He defines several key factors in understanding the reality of nations in the ancient Middle East: ethnicity, territory, political order, and theology. The question of ethnicity is argued by Israel’s constant calling back to a common origin in their father Jacob. This is evident through the repeated phrase "sons of Israel" (Block 1986, pp. 492-493). The question of territory was not a simple determinant. It was connected with monarchical political order. In general, it was not so much a determinant of one ethnicity, but depended on the king's ability to unite several territories. Examples of this is Northern Israel and Judah. Accordingly, politics itself revolved around monarchy (1986, pp. 492-493). According to Block, theology played a key role in the ethnicity of a nation in the ancient Middle East. In the context of the ancient Middle East, Semitic nations would associate themselves with protective gods in various ways. Block sees in it the fundamental difference between Israelis and other Semitic nations. Semitic nations would attribute a particular land to a particular god and therefore considered it normal to worship the god of a particular area, even more of them. With the Israelites, this was not the case because they saw themselves as God’s nation, and the land was God’s gift to them (1986, pp. 493-494). According to Block, there are several biblical texts that summarize God's relationship to nations. The origin of nations, according to the

Hebrew worldview, is described in Deuteronomy 32:8; where we read how God is the one who shaped nations and divided their land according to the number of sons of God. Yahweh continued to spread his authority over the nations and to move them as He pleased (Isaiah 10:13; Amos 9:7). The text of the list of nations from Genesis 10 is one of the most comprehensive ancient Middle Eastern writings in which the origin of the nations and their mutual connection are explained. This text places Abraham's choice in the wider human family and general human history. Abraham should be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:3). According to Exodus 19:5, Israel should be a royal priesthood; it has a mediating role between God and other nations. According to 1 Kings 8:41-43, this was also the purpose of the Temple (1986, p. 495).

According to Block, Israel as a nation should be understood in the above ancient context. God gave the patriarchs a promise that Israel would receive the status of a גּוֹי or nation Genesis 12, that it descendants would be great Genesis 17: 6, that God would be the deity of Israel Genesis 17:7, that he would give them land Genesis 17: 8, and a king Genesis 17:6. It is interesting to note that through Israel's formative years in Egypt, Israel was a גּוֹי or nation, even without land or a king. Land or king were not a condition of its status as a גּוֹי. Jeremiah 18:6-9 speaks of the destruction and rebuilding of the nation of Israel. But prophet Micah says that Yahweh will raise the גּוֹי from the marginalized and he himself will be their king (1986, pp. 494-495). We will later say something more about the restoration of the Jews as a Nation after their return from Babylonian captivity as we will be speaking about the book of Ezra and Nehemiah.

New Testament perspective on different collectivist identities

We now move to the New Testament. Speaking of the nations the New Testament primarily uses the word ἔθνε or ethne (Matthew 10:18; Romans 15:9-10) taken from the LXX.

This term is used mainly for gentiles. The word λαῷ or laoi is used mostly for Israel (Luke 2:31; 21:23; Acts 4:25; Hebrews 11:25) (Christensen 1992, p. 1037).

After we have highlighted New Testament terminology for nations, we will try to give a brief overview of the New Testament perspective on the question of the nations, especially the relationship between the Jewish People and others "ἔθνε" in the history of salvation. Although in Matthew 10:5 we see that Jesus sends disciples only to the Israelites, after the nation of Israel rejected him we see a different direction in Matthew 12:18. This is a key line for understanding Jesus 'restoration of Israel or the creation of a new Israel. This is a quote from Isaiah 42:2. Matthew here identifies Jesus with the servant of Yahweh who brings justice to all nations (Block 1986, p. 496). Here in the New Testament, the theme of God's plan of salvation through the Messiah Jesus Christ for all nations is more clearly stated then in Old Testament. For Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of the Messiah. Jesus identifies himself with Israel. He is the Messiah king of the new Israel. The specificity of this new Israel, represented by the Messiah king, is that it is not exclusive for the other nations. The Messiah Jesus includes other nations, bringing justice to all nations. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus sends his disciples to all nations Matthew 28:19. In Acts 1:8 we can see the continuation of this direction. Jesus commands his disciples to wait for him in Jerusalem where they will receive his father's promise: the Holy Spirit, then they will be witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. When this promise of the Spirit is fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2, we see that according to Acts 2:5 and Acts 2:10 the Spirit's tendency is to spread the gospel of the Messiah Jesus to all nations under heaven: Acts 2:5 "παντὸς ἔθνους". We see how Luke's choice of the word "ἔθνους" here is directed toward Gentiles, not Jews only. We have the same direction in Acts 10 where the Spirit leads Peter to the Roman officer Cornelius. This text is important to us because looking at it in context we see how this openness to others and different, to other nations, was not something natural to the Church

initially. It was hard for the Church to go further from its Jewish context what is obvious for example from Peters reaction to God's initiative to go to Cornelius initially. God had to make a special effort to convince Peter, the leader of the Church at the time, that he should go preaching to the Gentiles. In the beginning of the Christian community there was a kind of antagonism to the idea that other nations could become heirs of God's promises to Abraham without becoming Jews. We have discussion about this in Acts 15. The key change we see in the apostle Paul's writing. He emphasizes that in Christ there is no longer a difference between Jews and other nations. This is what Paul says in Romans 1 and 2. In Romans 1:16 he says that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a power of salvation to everyone who believes, both Jews and Greeks. He writes about this in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither is nor nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Paul emphasizes this thesis in the context of the discussion of the nature of salvation. According to him, salvation in Christ is not received on the basis of the fulfillment of the Law, but on the basis of faith in the work of Jesus Christ, which applies equally to Jews and Greeks. Paul also says this in Romans 10:12: "For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him…" (Block 1986, p. 496). Paul has a special emphasis on this topic in the Epistle to the Ephesians when, in 2: 13-14, he says that both Jews and Gentiles through the Blood of Christ can come together and have peace in Christ. The value system of the Messiah's New Israel is equality for all nations. There is no more difference on national, social or other grounds. The Apostle John in his eschatological vision in Revelation 5:9-10 presents the kingdom of God as a domain where people from every tribe, language, and nation will contribute (1986, p. 496).

This brief overview of the biblical view of nations shows us that the modern understanding of nations must not be equated with biblical understanding. However, this does not mean that the Scriptures do not contain the concept of the human collectivistic groups and

their social organization nations. It expresses this in its terminology and categories. From this perspective, it is closer to primordial theory of understanding, where the people are tied to a common origin and rulers. A specific determinant of the biblical understanding of a nation is related to the connection of a specific nation with a certain deity or patron. Israel understood itself as nation from its relationship with Yahweh. Yahweh is the protector of Israel. Yet his lordship is much broader. He is the creator of the whole earth and the Pantocrator of all other nations. This direction is already indicated in the Old Testament (Isaiah 42:2) and becomes apparent in the life of Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:18) and in the act of sending his disciples to all nations (Matthew 28:19). This openness to all nations is evident in the mission of the church and in the eschatological vision of the kingdom of God where there is room for all nations (Revelation 5:9-10). In what follows, we will focus on two specific Old Testament texts from Ezra and Nehemiah and see how this breadth of God's saving act for all nations is presented at that point.

The renewal of a collective identity in Ezra and Nehemiah

Historical context of Ezra and Nehemiah

Before we go specifically to Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3 and 13:4-31, we need to consider the historical and literary context of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Let us first observe the events in Ezra and Nehemiah historically. Looking at the broader biblical context God delivered the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and brought them to the land of Canaan, the land he promised to Abraham. They settled there. The people experienced progress during the reign of King David and Solomon. After Solomon came a long period of spiritual decay. It lasted about 400 years. God's people were not faithful to God. They worshiped other gods and did not keep the commandments of Torah. Despite several attempts of reform, they hardened their hearts and refused to return to God. God therefore gave his people into the hands of their enemies. In 586 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian

army destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Many suffered and died. A small part remained. But most were arrested and deported to Babylon. We read about that in Psalm 137: 1-4, illustrating the grief of the Jewish people in Babylonian captivity. According to Jeremiah 29:10, this period lasted about 70 years, counting from 586 to 516, when the restored temple in Jerusalem was consecrated. There are other possibilities of counting time with regard to the various deportations of Jews from Judah and Jerusalem, such as that of 597 during the reign of King Jehoiachin. No matter how we calculate the time the period was quite long. But over time, the power of the Babylonian kingdom began to decline. The last king of Babylon was Balthazar. We read about his ungodliness and fall in the book of Daniel, chapter 5. This is where the events described in the book of Ezra begin and the action in the book of Nehemiah continues.

Ezra 1:1 begins with the reference to the Persian king Cyrus. He conquered Babylon in 538 BC. He completely changed his policy with the exiles, unlike the Babylonian kings who took people into slavery, King Cyrus decided to bring the people back to their lands and restore their cult worship. This was a huge change for the Jewish people. The period of return after a long period of exile. In accordance with his policy of returning exiles, the king issued a decree on the return of Jews who had been taken into slavery by the Babylonian Empire. We read about this decree in Ezra 1:2-4 (Klein, 1999, p. 661). Thus the first six chapters of Ezra refer to the fulfillment of Cyrus' decree on returnees from exile and refer to the period from 538 to 515 BC (Myers, 1965, p. XLI).

The first group of returnees was led by Sheshbazzar who was later replaced by governor Zerubbabel and priest Yeshua. They led the renovation of the Jerusalem Temple, during which they encountered opposition from the surrounding population. The book then mentions King Darius I who confirmed Cyrus' decree. Restoration continued and the Temple was consecrated in 516 BC as we read about it in Ezra 6 (Klein, 1999, p. 661). If we try to

place the plot in Ezra 1-6 according to the reign of certain kings than we need to list the king Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes I. Than after the Ezra 7 to the end of Nehemiah refers to the reign under Artaxerxes I (Myers, 1965, p. XLI).

Eighty years after the events described in Ezra 1-6, King Artaxerxes I (pp. 465-424) sends a priest Ezra to restore religious life and observance of the Torah. In Ezra 9 to 10 we read about how Ezra led the people into public confession of sins and the dissolution of marriages with strangers (Klein, 1999, p. 661). The traditional approach says that Ezra came to Jerusalem 458 BC. We come to this conclusion if we assume that Artaxerx in Ezra 7: 1-8 is the same Artaxerx mentioned in Nehemiah. The problem is created by what we have in Ezra 10:6 where we read that Ezra met Johanan the son of the high priest Eliashib. According to Nehemiah 12, this Johanan should be the grandson of Eliashib with whom Nehemiah corresponded. In that case Ezra and Nehemiah would not be in Jerusalem at the same time and the whole conception of the content of the text is changing and questioning (Wuench, 2021, p. 4). Edwin M. Yamauchi et al. in 1980 p. 9., offers an interesting solution to this apparent contradiction. Namely, in the Old Testament alone we have about fourteen different people named Johanan. Josephus lists as many as seventeen different people with that name. That all together will say that this name was very popular at the time. Therefore, to identify Johanan of Ezra with Johanan quoted by Flavius after the Greek conquest of Persia does not make much sense (as cited in Wuench et al., 2021, p. 4). Therefore, in our approach to Ezra and Nehemiah, we will take the traditional dating.

As for the dating of the time in which the book of Nehemiah takes place, there are indications that it is in the 20th year of the reign of King Aratxerx I or 445 BC. He is mentioned, for example, in Nehemiah 2:1. There are, for example, extra biblical sources that support this: Elephantine Papyri, which dates from the year 408 BC (p. 2). Around 445, King Artaxerxes I sent Nehemiah to lead the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem. In Nehemiah 8-

10 Ezra and Nehemiah lead together the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, the public reading of the Law and the consecration of the Jewish community in Jerusalem (Klein, 1999, p. 661).

Literary context of Ezra and Nehemiah

There is a scientific consensus that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally a single work (Wuench, 2021, p. 1). First of all this is evident from the text of Ezra and Nehemiah in different ways. For example, in Ezra chapter ten we do not have clear conclusion at the end. This indicates that the continuation follows (p. 2). Further on, an early tradition views these two books as one. We see this in the rabbinic tradition. For example, we have notes for the Masoretic text for both books only after Nehemiah, not immediately after Ezra. Josephus Flavius and Eusebius also see them as one book (Fensham, 1982, p. 1). They are one book in the Septuagint. Only Origen in the 2nd century views them as two books, while the first Hebrew edition that lists them as two books we find only in the 15th century (Wuench, 2021, p. 2). Many scholars have criticized the chronological order in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, keeping in mind the modern understanding of what chronology should look like. But what we need to consider is the nature of the Ancient Middle Eastern chronology. The main question here is not when something happened, but under what circumstances it happened (pp. 2-3).

Concerning the structure, attention should be paid to the nature of the Middle Eastern texts, they were written with the intention of being read publicly. They are therefore written as oral texts. That is why they have their own internal specific logic and we can expect unexpected elements. These elements in Ezra and Nehemiah are, for example: various lists of returnees, Aramaic texts and autobiographical remarks (p. 5). Regarding the composition of the text, Wuench states that there is an internal logic and organization of the text in the books that is not guided by the chronology of events or history itself. Yet the logic of the text is in

selecting historical events and facts that the authors of Ezra and Nehemiah put together. If we want to take into account the real intention and meaning of Ezra and Nehemiah, then we need to take into account the chronology of events that the author presents in the text. In this way we will understand not only the meaning of the text, but also how the Jewish community experienced itself and its identity after the Babylonian captivity (p. 3). What the chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah reveals about the structure of the books:

> The combination of these sources leads to three major parts of the Book. Ezra 1–6 narrates events, starting about 100 years prior to Ezra or Nehemiah. Ezra 7–10 relates the deeds of Ezra with the emphasis on the building of the temple in Jerusalem. The Book of Nehemiah finally speaks out the deeds of Nehemiah with the emphasis on the building of the wall. This is a very rough structure following the historical related events. (p. 5)

This threefold structure also locates three important events, namely: Temple Building, Community Renewal, Building Walls. What we see in all three events, as Tim Mackie notices: is a negative attitude towards strangers (Mackie, 2018). We also see in all of them that religious leaders, in order to solve their problem with the opposition, sought help from the authorities (Mackie, 2018). While books are devoted to the rebuilding of the Temple, walls and communal identity, the topic that unites them is spiritual renewal and a call to the authority of the Torah.

The Theological context of Ezra and Nehemiah with special reference to Nehemiah chapters 12 and 13

Through historical and literary analysis, we have been introduced to some of the characteristics of these two books that lead us to certain conclusions. For example, the uniqueness of Ezra and Nehemiah as a literary unit suggests that we must look at the books as

united work if we want to understand the author's intention and draw some lessons. For example, Mackie argues that if we keep the unity of the books we can recognize three key movements in them that have two different conclusions (2018). He presents it as follows:

> Three Parallel Movements: Ezra 1-6: Zerubbabel and Joshua lead the first wave of exiles back from Babylon (with mixed results); Ezra 7-10: Ezra attempts a spiritual revival among the returned exiles (again, with mixed results); Nehemiah 1-7: Nehemiah leads the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls (with mixed results). Two Conclusions: Nehemiah 8-10: Ezra and Nehemiah stage a revival in Jerusalem ...; Nehemiah 11-13:… which basically fails and ends with Nehemiah's anger and disappointment. (Mackie, 2018)

Having this overview in mind I want to focus on the concluding part of Ezra and Nehemiah work Nehemiah 11-13, particularly to: Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3 and Nehemiah 13:4-31. Number of authors see these two texts as conclusion of this united work. For example Williamson explains Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-14 as the part where the use and abuse of the Temple is discussed; and 13:15-31 where we have the final necessary reforms (1985, p. 389). Myers sees 12:44 to 13:1-3 as discussion for the provision for the Temple and the cleansing from foreigners, and Nehemiah 13:4-31 where Nehemiah's reforms are discussed (1965, pp. 207-208). Davies also perceives chapters 12 and 13 as anticlimax (1999, p. 127). There are two themes that dominate in this conclusion. The theme of "cleansing the community" or "setting the boundaries" for the sake of keeping the identity of a community in Nehemiah 12: 44 to 13: 1-3. And the failure or partial success of the leaders as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah in renewing the Jewish community and its identity after returning from Babylonian captivity in Nehemiah 13:4-31.

Let us firstly consider the theme of "setting the boundaries" from the Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-4. We read here that the Jews, while reading the Law, noticed that the Ammonite and

the Moabite were not allowed to enter the congregation of God. As their conclusion they decided to exclude all foreigners. We assume that they read Deuteronomy 23:8-9. When we compare the content of that text with what they did we can ask whether Ezra and Nehemiah set boundaries of their community properly? We read in Deuteronomy 23:8-9 that God said that foreigners like the Egyptians and Edomites can be accepted into the community after the third generation. Deuteronomy 23:8-9 speaks only of the exclusion of the Ammonites and the Moabites up to 10 generations. Not all generations necessarily. The reason given to us in Deuteronomy and Nehemiah is their in hospitability towards the Israelites when they were to enter the Promised Land and because of the cursing of the prophet Balaam (Klein, 1999, p. 842). When we read the book of the Ruth we find that throughout Israeli history there were converts from Moab and Amon who were admitted to the community of Israel (Williamson, 1985, p. 386). In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we often see a tendency of Jews to exclude foreigners from their initiatives. For example, in the project of rebuilding the Temple, community and walls. In Ezra 4, when the Jews begin to build the Temple in Jerusalem, the surrounding people living in Palestine in that time, probably a mixture of the Jewish people who remained in the Land and different people group who immigrated to that territory according to the policy of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, offered help in rebuilding the Temple. They said they worshiped the same God as the exiles. They received a negative response from Zerubabel with the explanation that this is a project only of returnees. What we find therefore is an exclusivist tendency in building one identity. We have a similar situation in Ezra 9-10 when Ezra came to the land to build community and teach them in Torah. He found many elders compromising by marrying people from the surrounding people. Together with Shekaniah son of Jehiel, Ezra lead people in divorcing form the foreign wife's and their children. Nehemiah in Chapter 13 learns that the problem of marriages with foreigners is even worse. No matter what judgment we have about what Jews have done to foreigners the lesson

we can bring is that identity can be preserved by clearly made boundaries to a particular identity. Of course, the question remains what are the good boundaries that need to be drawn in order to preserve certain identity?

The second passage from Nehemiah 13:4-31 brings another theme: the failure or partial success of the leaders as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah in renewing the Jewish community and its identity. The theme imposes itself by the way how the work of Ezra and Nehemiah finishes. After what seemed like a happy ending in the first part of Chapter 12, the celebrations for building the walls, from 13:4-31 we see the anticlimax through several events. In 13:4-9 Nehemiah encounters the abuse of the Temple. He finds Tobias having a room in the lobby of the Temple arranged for him by his cousin Eliashib, a high priest. From 13:10-14 Nehemiah learns that the Levites were not given their share, so they abandoned their ministry in the Temple. Then from 13:15-22 he finds that the Sabbath is being broken. And from 13:23-31 he found Jews who had married Ashdodites, Ammonites, and Moabites. After Nehemiah becomes acquainted with these events, in the last verse he prays to God to remember him for all the good he has done, and the book ends.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah do not end as we would expect given the glorious beginning, return and renewal of the Jewish community. The efforts of Zerubbabel through the restoration of the Temple, Ezra through the teaching of the Law and Nehemiah through the restoration of the Jerusalem walls do not end in success, or rather end in partial success and disappointment. According to Nehemiah 12 and 13 the people did not respect the Temple, Sabbath and purity laws. Davies says that readers accustomed to happy endings by reading Nehemiah 12 and 13 may be very surprised because this book does not end with a happy ending but with the realization that the reforms that have been made so far have not yielded satisfactory results (1999, p. 127). Mackie notes that throughout the whole book of Ezra and Nehemiah we have high expectations in the context of rebuilding the Jewish community and

its identity and then disappointing anticlimaxes: Ezra 3:12-13 at the consecration of the Temple the elders wept because this Temple was not even close to the glory that the first Temple had. When Ezra came to the land in Ezra 9-10 he found many elders making a compromise by marrying people from the surrounding people. In Nehemiah 5 we read when Nehemiah returned to build walls he revealed how many Jews entered into practices that enslaved their fellow Israelites. We culminate in Nehemiah 8-10 when we have the reading of the Torah for seven days and the consecration of the people and the promise of serving God and keeping the commandments of the Torah. After that event, Nehemiah leaves for Persia and returns to Chapter 13 when he learns a disappointing thing: The temple is neglected, people are breaking the Sabbath, and the problem of marriages with foreigners is even worse (2018). Williamson points to the anticlimax of Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-31, arguing that true history consists not only of the glorious deeds of great and brave figures, but of the daily failures of one nation. The author of Nehemiah does not leave us with a fairy tale about the celebration in the Temple, but with the reality of the fall and difficulties in maintaining the purity of a nation (Williamson, 1985, p. 389). Myers also speaks of section 12:44 to 13:1-31 as an anticlimax. He singles out passage in Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3 as a contrast to the deviations that will appear later in 13:4-31, especially those related to the priest Eliashib and his cousin Tobias (p. 207-208).

Analyzing the content of Chapters 12 and 13 we can conclude that the material was edited to point to a specific purpose. This is in line with what we discussed earlier when we said that the content of Ezra and Nehemiah is not necessarily chronologically arranged, but with the purpose to give a certain message (Davis, 1999, p. 127). We have interesting reference to prophet Jeremiah in Ezra 1:1. It points that the message of the book can be better understood if we take into consideration the prophetic perspective from the period of the return of the Jewish community from Babylonian captivity. For example, by reading Haggai,

Zechariah and Malachi we see that the vision of restoration is far broader than the one presented by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The book of the prophet Zechariah points to some of the problems of reform and reconstruction as led by the leaders at the time. Zechariah in 2:8-9 and 15 alludes that the vison of God for Jerusalem is to be the city for all the nations and that it doesn't need physical walls because the glory of God will be it wall (Mackie, 2018). What the prophet Jeremiah foretold was that the Jews would justifiably go into exile because of their worship of false gods and the transgressions against the Torah. But God will bring them back and fulfill His promise to Abraham. This promise includes that Jerusalem will become the epicenter of the restored kingdom of God that will bring peace to all the nations. We read about it also in Isaiah 2 and 11 and Ezekiel 34-37 (Mackie, 2018). Because we see partial fulfillment of these words in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah it indicates that the prophetic promises of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 have yet to be fulfilled. People have returned to the land of their ancestors, but they are still in spiritual exile. Thus, the purpose of Ezra and Nehemiah is to point out that the return to Judea was only a partial fulfillment of the promise of the prophetic visions of the coming of the Messiah, the New Covenant, and the Kingdom of God. It fulness will occur when God Himself enters in to the human history (2018). Mackie comments:

> The stories of Ezra and Nehemiah tell a realistic story of religious people who are zealous to help others see the world and God in a new way. They are full of passion and love for God, and to do everything in their power to lead the Israelites into a new era of devotion to their God… and it doesn't work. The story ends with Nehemiah in angry tears, beating the Israelites for violating the covenant commands of the Torah (see Nehemiah ch. 13). (2018).

This indicates that human leaders, whether political or religious, are limited in their efforts to build human societies. External reform is not enough. For humans to truly live, they

need to experience the inner reform of the heart, as pointed out by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Conclusion for biblical foundation

The book of Ezra and Nehemiah describes situation in which the favorable historical conditions were created for the Jewish community that had been living in exile in the Persian Empire. By the decree of the Persian king Cyrus, Jews had been allowed to return to their homeland and restore their community and identity. This was the task of leaders such as Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. This story reminds of great changes occurring in Europe after the 9 November 1989 when East German government allowed all its citizens to visit West Germany and West Berlin. That was event that moved great changes in Europe concerning the transition from communism to democracy of the countries that had been part of the Eastern bloc. Tuđman saw these events as favorable historical context for separation from the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and creation of the democratic Croatian state as fulfilment of the centuries-old desire of Croats to create their own state. The question remains: how did this process go? I believe that the biblical paradigm from the book of Ezra and Nehemiah has something to teach us about these processes. In Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3 and 13:4-31 we have at least two lessons that may be the biblical paradigm here: The first one is about "setting the boundaries" for the sake of keeping the identity of a community in Nehemiah 12: 44 to 13: 1-3; and the second one is about the failure or partial success of the leaders such as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah in renewing the Jewish community in Nehemiah 13:4-31.

In our analysis of Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-4, we pose the question about how much Ezra's and Nehemiah's purity reforms were in line with the Torah they had been referring to? We have seen that their conclusions about the exclusion of all foreigners from the Jewish community as a measure of community purity were not fully in line with Deuteronomy 23: 8-

9. Namely, by reading Deuteronomy 23 we saw how foreigners like Egyptians and Edomites can be admitted to the Jewish community after the third generation. Also, Deuteronomy 23: 8-9 speaks only of the exclusion of the Ammonites and the Moabites up to 10 generations, not all generations of Ammonites and Moabites necessarily. We also cited the example of the book of Ruth as an example for converts from Moab and Amon who were admitted to the Israeli community (Williamson, 1985, p. 386). The lesson we find here is that it is natural process to set certain boundaries that keep the identity of one nation, but those boundaries are not healthy if they are hostile to others and different. By analyzing broader prophetical context in the period of Ezra and Nehemiah we concluded that this was not the purpose of God for his people. In the context of our research, we find a similar tendences in Tuđman's project of building the Croatian state and identity. The project was oriented exclusively to the Croatian people. He tried to build the Croatian identity by opposing it to the Serbs. Later in this work we will try to analyze how religious leaders in Croatia reacted to such a project. Specifically, the exclusion of the Serbian minority through various actions so as not to be factors in building Croatian state.

Another biblical lesson is from the text of Nehemiah 13: 4-31. This passage teaches us that the complete transformation of society and the building of nations cannot be achieved exclusively by human efforts. Both politicians and religious leaders need to be aware of their limitations. Despite Zerubbabel's, Ezra, and Nehemiah sincere efforts, they could not change the hearts of the people so that they do justice and obey God's law. The best laws will not change people's hearts, so that they can do good and be just to their neighbors, to be inclusive and not partial. Yet the prophetic promises found in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 point to the reality of the new covenant that God wants to make with humanity in Jesus Christ. Enclaves of change and transformation for our societies can come through sincere repentance in response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. God entered the human history through Jesus Christ

and began the transformation of human hearts and lives. This transformation made through Jesus Christ and his Spirit is always inclusive not exclusive. Yet we are aware that this is only the beginning of what God will do with the world. A complete transformation will take place upon Christ second arrival. Till that moment, Christians need to live as responsible citizens who respect the principles of the New Covenant, which according to prophetic promises and New Testament fulfillment are not exclusive, but inclusive. The real identity of one nation cannot come by excluding another from its life, but by including it into its story. How, then, did religious leaders in Croatia respond to the challenge of populist nationalism during the 1990s? Did they make a compromise with the authorities or they had been prophetical voices and authentic witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Theological foundations for research

In the second part of this chapter, I want to analyze the theological and ecclesial voices that were a challenge to Croatian populist nationalism during the 1990s. Before analyzing the voices, themselves, I want to understand what the basic documents of the Evangelical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church brings about the issue of nations and nationalism. As for the evangelical perspective I will consider Cape Town Commitment. Regarding the Roman Catholic perspective, I will consider papal encyclic that deals with national identity and people "*Populorum progressio*" from Pope Paul VI. and the constitution of the II Vatican Council "*Lumen Gentium*." After that, I will analyze the reactions of some of the religious leaders to Tuđman's vision of building the Croatian state and identity. Among Roman Catholic leaders I will consider Cardinal Franjo Kuharić, Bishop Antun Škvorčević and priest Živko Kustić. Among Evangelical leaders, I will consider Peter Kuzmič, president of Protestant Evangelical Council during 1990s and the leader one of the largest evangelical denominations in Croatia Evangelical Pentecostal Church, and Miroslav Volf, an influential Protestant theologian from Croatia.

The Cape Town Commitment on building peace and justice among nations

The Cape Town Commitment (CTC) is divided in two main parts: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action. In second part, a Call to Action, the second section is entitled "Building the peace of Christ in our divided and broken world." This part of CTC considers how the peace between fallen man and God that Christ achieved through his cross affects' certain areas of human society and God's creation. Specifically, how the peace of Christ becomes a reality amid ethnic conflict, poverty, and exploitation, among people with disabilities and in the context of God's suffering creation (CTC 2012, p. 39). This document does not give a general overview of biblical theology of nations but focuses on specific areas such as: recognizing God's positive attitude toward nations as part of his creation, the fact that nations moved from their original purpose which resulted in ethnic conflicts and building of peace and justice among nations.

Another evangelical document focuses in more detail on biblical theology of nations: *The Impact on Global Mission of Religious Nationalism and 9/11 Realities (LOP 50)* (The Lausanne Movement 2004). This document brings several biblical texts: Genesis 10:5 in the context of the expansion of the sons of Noah where we have a list of nations; Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26 where we read that God is creator of nations (The Lausanne Movement 2004). Then it brings Genesis 11 and a description of the construction of the Tower of Babel, where we read about the deviation and fall of people. This text brings a realistic view of distorted communal identity, tainted by sin, which sees its gain in the detriment of others. Then Genesis 12 where we read about God's effort to restore the nations through Abraham which is to be a blessing to all nations. Furthermore, the document speaks of the shaping of Israel and the Church as God's spiritual people or a theological reality, not a historically organic one. In Luke 3 we have a parallel to the list of nations from Genesis 10. In Matthew 28 we have a great commission that shapes our mission as directed to all nations. In Acts 2 on

Pentecost we have the beginning of fulfilling a great commission through the proclamation of the mighty works of God in every language of the nations. The content of the Christian proclamation is Christ who brings peace between man and God and among the nations through his cross (Ephesians 2; Romans 1:14-15). The Church has the task of being the living presence of this reconciliation in this world (2 Corinthians 5:18). The end of this review ends with the eschatological reality in which nations have their place in the new creation according to Revelation 21:22-27 (The Lausanne Movement 2004).

By reading the CTC we can identify three fundamental determinants in its theology of the nations. The first is creation. Ethnic diversity is a gift of God (Deuteronomy 32:8; Acts 17:26). The second is fall. Nations have been disturbed by human sin and enmity has arisen between them (Genesis 11). And the third is redemption. Ethnic diversity will be preserved in the new creation by new and restored people of God (Revelation 7:9; 21:3; 21:22-24) (CTC 2012, p. 40). The document acknowledges the Church failure in relationship to ethnic identities. The Church has not always been able to value ethnic diversity with respect to biblical testimony in these three areas listed above (2012, p. 41). Therefore, the document invites pastors to teach the biblical worldview about ethnic identity. The biblical worldview includes a positive attitude toward ethnic identities; an understanding that our ethnic identity is tainted by sin; and our ethnic identity is subordinated to a new identity in Christ (2012, p. 41). The document also expresses regret over the church's participation in ethnic violence and moments when Church was silent about such acts. CTC acknowledges that the Church itself has often been involved in ethnic conflicts, either directly and actively or indirectly and passively. These include racism, the Holocaust, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, religious, political, and ethnic violence among Christians. The Church needs to repent for that. It must be rooted in context, but in a way that continually challenges systems of injustice (2012, p. 41). In order for the Church to be able to carry out mission given, it needs to understand the

biblical principle of reconciliation: Christ bore our sins on the cross not only to reconcile us to God, but to destroy the enmities that exist between us (2012, pp. 41-42).

There are two key themes that dominate in this document: peace and justice. Christ established peace between God and man through his cross (Ephesians 2:14-18; Romans 1:16-17; 3:23; 10: 12-13). This peace refers not only to the peace between God and man but is also inseparable from the peace between man and man. This includes peace between nations. Nations can find peace among themselves in Christ, for it is God's plan for all to be brought together in Christ (Ephesians 1:10). In the realization of peace among the nations through Christ, God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled. It is a blessing promised to Abraham (Genesis 12 and Galatians 3:6-9) (2012, pp. 39-40). Choosing the theme of peace as dominant, this document does not remain on the theology of nations in general but is interested in the relationship between nations in a world filled with ethnic conflicts. Justice is the next topic. The document sees reconciliation with God and reconciliation with each other as the foundation for seeking justice. Only after reconciliation, acknowledging one's guilt, and receiving forgiveness can the basis for justice be sought (2012, p. 40). CTC does not give an overview of the theology of nations. It presents a biblical view of nations from three fundamental perspectives: nations as part of God's plan; nations broken by sin; and nations as part of God's future in the restored creation. The main themes in the document are peace and justice through reconciliation in the cross of Jesus Christ on a vertical and horizontal level. The Church needs to recognize its failings in relation to the nations and ethnic identity. It needs to repent and participate in God's mission of ethnic reconciliation.

The Roman Catholic attitude toward nations and nationalism

Here I want to analyze some interpretations of the relationship between nations and nationalisms from a Roman Catholic and Evangelical perspective. There are various documents where we can understand the Roman Catholic attitude toward nations and

nationalism. For example, Steven Grosby points to the following documents: Leo XIII's Sapientiae Christianae (1890); Pius XI's Mit Brennender Sorge (1937); Benedict XV's letter Cum Polaniae rebus (1920); Pius XI's / Allocution to the College of Cardinals / Benedetto il Natale (1930); Pius XII's Summi Pontificatus (1939) (Grosby, 2016). The context of these encyclicals where either post-war (World War I) or pre-war (World War II). They were developed in the context of conflict between nations and therefore emphasized the universal brotherhood of mankind. God is described as common father of mankind. There are two key elements that Grosby reads in these documents. First is that the Roman Catholic Church makes a distinction between love for nation as a good phenomenon and part of God established order, and second is criticism of radical ideology of nationalism that builds its nation by detriment of other nations (2016). Grosby describes it this way:

> The Teachings of the Church as was seen in the quotation from Leo XIII's *Sapientiae Christianae* (1890), which introduced this brief analysis, patriotism is understood by the Church to be natural, and, as such, to be subject to the natural law that enjoins "Every good citizen to face death for his native land." This natural attachment, a constitutive of patriotism, was described by Aquinas in the Summa as a "principle of being," "Piety extends to our country in so far as the latter is for us a principle of being" (Third Article on Piety). By the "principle of being," Aquinas and the Church recognize that human beings live in society, and that it is an expression of human nature for humans to do so. Thus, patriotism, as the attachment to one's own land and its people, is a manifestation of human nature, even though the organizational expressions of that natural manifestation vary historically, ranging from city-kingdom to region to nation. (2016)

According to Grosby's analysis, we can conclude that the Roman Catholic Church sees love for the homeland as a natural and God-given order for human and society. Robert W. McElroy highlights these elements in Roman Catholic theology of nations:

> In Catholic social teaching, the love of country is a virtue. The Compendium of the Social Teaching of the Church states clearly that "the principle of solidarity requires that men and women of our day cultivate a greater awareness that they are debtors of the society of which they have become a part." And in his moving message to the people of Poland entitled "My Beloved Countrymen," Pope John Paul II spoke of true patriotism amid the cauldron of oppression and upheaval: "Love of our motherland unites us and must unite us above all the differences. It has nothing in common with narrow nationalism or chauvinism. It is the right of the human heart. It is the measure of human nobility. (McElroy 2017)

McElroy points out that love for country is a virtue. This virtue has nothing in common with narrow nationalisms (2017). Comparing Grosby and McElroy, we clearly see that the Roman Catholic Church has a primarily positive attitude toward love for nation, and homeland. Yet, on the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church notices deviations in relation to our own nation in the form of nationalism and racism. In his encyclical "*Populorum Progressio*", Pope Paul VI wrote about this as follows:

> There are other obstacles to the creation of a more just social order and to the development of world solidarity: nationalism and racism. It is quite natural that nations recently arrived at political independence should be quite jealous of their new-found but fragile unity and make every effort to preserve it. It is also quite natural for nations with a long-standing cultural tradition to be proud of their traditional heritage. But this commendable attitude should be further ennobled by love, a love for the

whole family of man. Haughty pride in one's own nation disunites nations and poses obstacles to their true welfare. (Paul VI, 1967)

Pope Paul VI In his encyclical "Populorum progresio", points out that nationalism and racism are a threat to true love for one's own homeland and nation. True love for one's own nation should flow from love for the whole human family.

During his visit to Croatia in 1994, Pope John Paul II, in his address to the Croatian nation, pointed out that Vatican II, in its constitution Lumen Gentium, teaches that the Church is not only a sacrament of unity with God, but also of unity with whole human race (Pope John Paul II, 1994, p. 24). The main idea is that relationship with God invite us to build relationship, peace and love with other nations. He pointed out that Croatia, as a young state and democracy, has the support of Rome, especially in peaceful coexistence with other nations. He reminded that the Croatian people had promised Pope Agathon that they would live in peace with other nations (p. 19). He wishes peace for the Croatian nation. Also, he asks Croatian nation to strive for reconciliation. For that to be possible, we need to forgive, but also ask for forgiveness (pp. 19-20). Main topics that the Pope opened during his visit to Croatia in 1994 where peace, forgiveness, and unity of the entire human race (p. 24).

The summary of Catholic teaching is a positive attitude towards the nation and homeland, or patriotism, but there is a negative attitude towards nationalism. Love for one’s own nation is natural. But hatred for other nations is serious problem. The basic idea is to nurture love for all humanity because we are all created in the image of God. Love for one's own nation should contribute to the ennoblement of all mankind. *Lumen Gentium* points out that the church is the sacrament of the unity of all humanity, a sacrament that respects differences. And therefore the Church must be an active factor in building peace and reconciliation among nations (*Lumen Gentium* 1998, pp. 93-95). The fundamental thought in

Roman Catholic authors and documents consists in the tension of positivism which consists in the love of one's own nation and in negation of nationalism.

Roman Catholic voices in Croatia that challenged Croatian populist nationalism in the 1990s

Franjo Kuharić

The relevant work in this area is the work of Julija Barunčić Pletikosić, *The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991-1995: Attitudes, Action and Suffering*; as well as her article *Attitudes and Activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia during 1995 (during and after the Croatian liberation operations "Flash" and "Storm")*. In her work, she researched the position of Cardinal Franjo Kuharić, Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops, as well as the positions of individual priests on this issue. When Barunčić writes about the position of the Roman Catholic Church on the Homeland War (1991-1995) she uses the dogmatic constitution of the Vatican II.: *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope). It describes the position of the Roman Catholic Church on military actions (Barunčić 2015, p. 89). The pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* holds that armed action is only appropriate when all other options for a peaceful resolution have been exhausted and when it furthers "human rights, freedom, and peace" (p. 564). The Roman Catholic Church in Croatia had a similar outlook to the Roman Catholic Church worldwide.

Cardinal Franjo Kuharić was one of the major figures in the Croatian Roman Catholic Church in the 1990s. He was ordained as a bishop in 1964. In 1983, Pope John Paul II made him a cardinal. During the Croatian wartime events in 1994, he hosted the Pope during his visit to the country. After retiring in 1997, he passed away in 2002. According to Vatican II and the document *Gaudium et spes*, Kuharić's fundamental stance is that the Croatian people have been attacked and have a right to self-defense. Kuharić, however, asserted that the Serbian residents of those districts must not be harmed in any way by this military action.

They ought to be entitled to the same range of human rights as other Croatian citizens (p. 565). He instructs Croatian soldiers to "Be human" in this regard. On August 6, 1995, Kuharić gave a sermon in Marija Bistrica to the Croatian military (p. 567). They ought to be "human" in the sense that they don't discriminate and treat all Croatian citizens with dignity, including those of Serbian descent, as they share Croatian citizenship and are entitled to a life of peace and justice (p. 566).

On August 8, 1995, the Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops (HBK) in their Official Gazette et. al. in 1995 issued an official statement in the context of military operation "Storm". They gave an analysis of the condition of the Roman Catholic parishes, related to the destroyed buildings. They also gave instructions on the restoration of Roman Catholic parishes. Then they mention the exodus of the Serbian population. But their conclusion is that the responsibility does not lie with the Croatian but with the Serbian authorities. In this context, they spoke about the justice and equality of all inhabitants of the Republic of Croatia as a precondition for lasting peace in this area (as cited in Barunčić et. al., 2015, p. 568). Kuharić holds the following views on patriotism and respect for all people:

> In almost every one of his sermons in the parishes that were occupied in the area, immediately after the "Storm", Cardinal Kuharić called for knowledge, kindness, peace and love instead of revenge and hatred, that is, appealed to Croatian government and defenders that after the military operation and the liberation of Croatia territories protect above all the rights and freedoms of every man, every citizen of the Republic of Croatia. Thus, in a sermon in Hrastovica near Petrinja on the 24th. August 1995. specifically pointed out that "patriotism must not be poisoned by a drop at hatred or desire for revenge; the defense of freedom and peace is a right and a duty, but always in the legality of the rule of law; therefore nothing can be done against either human

> person, nor against her property what would be outside the legal defense and what it would only be an expression of hatred and revenge. (Barunčić, 2015, p. 569)

Kuharić and Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops in their Official Gazette et. al. in 1995 expressed their opinion on popular nationalism more clearly after the meeting with Pope John Paul II. at the Vatican on October 17, 1995:

> They particularly emphasized the task of strengthening reconciliation among individuals and ethnic groups, urging them to "reject the myth of nationalism and to nurture healthy patriotism, encouraging such sincerity coexistence "; instructing them to work on strengthening dialogue and mutual respect with Orthodox believers at the local, national and regional levels, as well as to the Muslim, and on the restoration of all the sacral buildings which are at war destroyed, because these are signs of hope and means of communion. (as cited in Barunčić et. al., 2015, p. 575)

This statement is in line with the thought of Roman Catholic theologian Steven Grosby, that the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church is to reject unhealthy nationalism and nurture healthy patriotism (Grosby, 2016).

In his book *Franjo Kuharić, Cardinal and Authority*, the contemporary Croatian expert in resent Croatian history Miroslav Akmadža examined Kuharić's life and work. In 2020, the work was published. He noted several principles that Kuharić did not depart through his public ministry. One of these is the separation of Church and politics. On several occasions, Tuđman tried to win over Kuharić and other church officials for his worldview and political goals. For example, he included some Roman Catholic priests, such as Ante Baković and Tomislav Buka, at the first assembly of the HDZ. He also invited Kuharić himself to the same assembly. However, Kuharić refused and thus showed that he does not intend to interfere in political issues. However, after the assembly, Tuđman visited Kuharić

unannounced with some descendants of those Croats who fled Croatia after World War II. who attended the assembly. Kuharić did not like it, because someone could misinterpret that he, as a religious official, supports a certain political party (Akmadža, 2020, pp. 424-425). Kuharić criticized the First Assembly of the HDZ because of some extremist national positions expressed. He said that excessive emotions can lead to national extremism. For example, there were some expatriate Croats who publicly favored the NDH – Croatian independent pro fascist state during II. World war (pp. 424-425). Kuharić also criticized the work of the Croatian Parliament due to the lack of intellectual discussion. He claimed that the HDZ makes decisions and laws on the basis of political strength, and not on the basis of reasoned discussions with the opposition (p. 524). It is clear that Kuharić did not agree with Tuđman's perception of democracy in the context of his antagonism towards those who imagined the Croatian state differently. This is evident, for example, from the fact that Tuđman did not want to confirm Marina Matulović Dropulić as the mayor of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, because she was from the opposition and a former communist. Kuharić saw such an act as a threat to democracy and the free will of citizens (p. 554). Another example is related to Kuharić's criticism of Tuđman's speech at the HDZ party assembly in 1996, in which Tuđman criticized all those who disagree with HDZ's policy in the organizing the Croatian state. Kuharić asserted that the interests of one party cannot be identified with the interests of the entire nation (p. 555). On the other hand, Kuharić did not agree with the statements of politicians who tried to collect cheap political points through a populist attitude towards the Church. For example, he warned that some politicians take communion even though they did not meet the conditions for it. A true conversion is needed, not just political demagoguery (p. 459). Kuharić's commented Tuđman's visit to the cathedral in 1993 on Christmas. Namely, he was bothered by the fact that Tuđman's security arbitrarily determined the seating schedule. He indicated that if this happens again, he will tell Tuđman that his

arrival under such conditions is not acceptable (p. 525). Kuharić did not want Tuđman to use the Church in the direction of his political goals. This is also evident when planning the visit of Pope John Paul II. to Croatia in 1994. In the conversation with Kuharić, Tuđman emphasized that he wanted this to be a state visit. Kuharić replied that this was not possible, because the pope's visit to a country is primarily a visit of the pope to the Church in that country (p. 530).

The next principle that Kuharić did not want to deviate from is freedom and justice for all citizens of Croatia. He tried to emphasize this message from the very beginning of the conflict in the 1990s. For example, during a meeting with the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Pavle in Slavonski Brod on August 24, 1991, Kuharić, as is quoted in Official Gazette of the Archdiocese of Zagreb et. al. in 1991., pointed out that the task of the Church is to be "a messenger of peace, a protector of justice, and a defender of love and freedom for all people and nations" (as cited in Akmadža et. al., 2020, p. 460). During and after the conflict Kuharić continued to point to this message. On receiving representatives of religious communities on January 11, 1994, in the office of President Tuđman, he appealed to all factors of political power to promote fair relations between people and nations, because only together can we build a just peace. Rightful and peaceful relations between people and nations are the foundation of peace (Akmadža, 2020, p. 525). In accordance with the teaching of the Church, he taught that the fight for freedom and peace is justified, that it is a right and a duty, but that it must never come at the expense of another and different. It must go within the framework of the laws of the rule of law. Kuharić's criticism of the exclusive approach to citizenship built by Tuđman is evident from such views. Kuharić said that patriotism is a positive trait. However, it must not turn into racist, imperialist and chauvinist. There he also criticized Tuđman with regard to patriotism that is at the expense of others, especially imperialistic in relation to Muslims in Bosnia. We can read about this from Kuharić's sermon

on August 24, et al. in 1995, in Hrastovica near Petrinja, in the area that was recently liberated by the Croatian armed forces. There he said the following:

> Love for God is necessarily as also love for humanity, and love for humanity is also love for your nation. Therefore, our patriotism must not be poisoned by even a drop of hatred or the desire for revenge. Defense of freedom and peace is a right and a duty, but always within the legality of the rule of law. That's why nothing should be done against a human person, nor against their property, which would be beyond legal defense and which would only be an expression of hatred and revenge! Therefore, our patriotism must not be racist, imperialist, or chauvinistic. Our patriotism is Christian. Therefore, I repeat what I said recently in Petrinja, and I said that on the feast of St. Laurence on August 10, 1991, a short time before Petrinja fell, and I repeated it five days later in the shrine of Mother of God Bistrica: If my opponent burned my house, I will not burn his! If he destroyed my church, I will not even touch his, in fact, I will protect it. If he left his home, I won't even take a needle from his! If he killed my father, brother, sister, I will not return the same measure, but I will respect the life of his father, brother, son and sister. That is the Gospel, perhaps difficult to understand for a downtrodden and humiliated man, a downtrodden and humiliated people, but that Gospel is a pledge of victory! These must be our actions because otherwise we too would be victims of the Dragon. (as cited in Barunčić et. al., 2015, p. 569)

Kuharić's position on the organization of the Croatian state was expressed in the following sentence that he recorded in his diary, and Akmadža published in his book: "...now that we have a state, we must be smart and organize it so that it is fair for everyone and a guarantee for personal freedoms of all people" (Akmadža, 2020, p. 558).

It was for this reason that he criticized any discrimination, especially one done to the Serbian national minority. He strongly condemned the bombing of the diocesan home of the

Serbian Orthodox Church in Karlovac on Catholic Christmas. He stated that whoever did this is not a friend of "man and nation" (p. 524). After the military liberation operations of the Croatian army, "Storm", Kuharić wrote to Tuđman about the need to respect human rights and freedom of all citizens of Croatia, especially in liberated areas (p. 554). Also, he expressed concern about certain misconduct by the Croatian army. Gojko Šušak, Tuđman's right-hand and former Croatian defense minister said that sometimes it is difficult to prevent some arbitrary conducts of certain parts of the army (pp. 527-528). On October 25, 1994, in his conversation with the Vice-President of the Croatian Parliament, Vladimir Šeks, Kuharić expressed his concern because Serbian houses and church buildings were being demolished (p. 530). Kuharić criticized every crime, no matter who committed it. He was aware that there had been crimes on the Croatian side as well. He condemned them in his sermon in the Zagreb Cathedral on October 31, 1993 (p. 524). It is interesting to consider the planning of the Pope's visit to Croatia. The Pope did not want his visit to be seen exclusively as a visit to the Croatian people. He wanted it to be a visit to Croats, Serbs and Muslims. Therefore, initially he wanted to visit Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb (p. 530).

While having in mind these general principles, Kuharić's challenge of Tuđman's different political stands is evident. For example, in an earlier part of the thesis, we mentioned Tuđman's opinion about Jasenovac. Jasenovac is place where Croatian puppet fascist state in World War II committed war crimes against Serbs. Tuđman promoted idea that this place should become a common cemetery for all Serbian and Croat victims of World War II. Kuharić was bothered by this idea, what he stated in his diary (p. 556).

Than, Kuharić was against the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina that Tuđman negotiated with Milošević (p. 489). He criticized Tuđman for succumbing to the politic of Mate Boban regarding the division of BiH and criticized the possible crimes committed against Muslims (p. 510). On May 9, 1994, he met with Tuđman. He asked him could conflict

with Muslims in BiH been prevented? Tuđman replied that it was not possible because the Muslims wanted to compensate losses by the Serbs, at the expense of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Antun Škvorčević

Bishop Antun Škvorčević of the Roman Catholic Church is noteworthy for his ecumenical endeavors and relationship with the Serbian Orthodox Church. He participates in the conversation with the Serbian Orthodox Church on behalf of the Croatian Episcopal Commission. The Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome awarded him a PhD in 1981. He was named the first bishop of the recently established Diocese of Požega by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

Škvorčević wrote about activities of Cardinal Kuharić during the 1990s in his article *Peacemaking and ecumenical efforts of church leaders during the Homeland War* in the monography of Živković, Ilija, (1996), *Wounded Church in Croatia*, Zagreb: Targa. There he describes the meeting between Cardinal Kuharić and Patriarch Pavle in the direction of the rapprochement of the two churches in the context of war events in the former Yugoslavia in 1991 in Srijemski Karlovci, May 7 (Škvorčević, 1996, p. 33). He brings out Kuharić attitude that they, as preachers of the gospel, are not called to give political speeches, but to call their believers to conversion and peace (p. 34). Kuharić's key message is that religious officials should witness those things that connect people, while politicians emphasized differences (p. 34). This message is important because it expresses a very different attitude about the relationship between the Croat and Serbs than the one proclaimed by Tuđman. As we have already described, Tuđman tried to emphasize the differences that exist between the two nations. Here, Kuharić points out that there are more elements that connect these two nations than those that separate them. Kuharić emphasized that Roman Catholics and Orthodox believe in the same God, Creator and Savior. His intention was to highlight the similarities

between Roman Catholic and Orthodox. According to him, both are messengers of peace, that is the peace of man with God, man with fellow man, and peace among the nations. For Kuharić, love for the truth leads to true peace, freedom, and justice for all (p. 34). The main theme of this meeting was that Roman Catholics and Orthodox, Serbs and Croats, have much more in common than things that divide them. This was contrary to the popular political voices of nationalism that surround them. Viewing one's neighbor as a human being and a brother are biblical views of one's relationship with neighbor. When we first treat each other as human beings and brothers, then we first look for what is similar in each other, and only then what is different.

Živko Kustić

Živko Kustić, a Greek Catholic priest from Samobor, was born in 1930 in Split and died in 2014 in Zagreb. He was ordained as a Greek Catholic priest of the Diocese of Križevci on May 4, 1958. He was a promoter of ecumenism.

Kustić challenged Tuđman's thesis that Croats and Serbs are two culturally and civilizational different peoples (Kustić, 1994, pp. 42-43). Kustić quotes Tuđman's statement that he gave on Christmas 1991 for the German magazine "Stern": "Serbia belongs to a completely different world, to a completely different civilization. There is a border between the Serbs and us. On one side the West, on the other the East. On one side, the Orthodox Church of the East, on the other, the Roman Catholic Church of the West" (p. 127). Kustić points out the illogicality of those attitudes by pointing out their consequences. If they were correct, then it would mean that even a Christian who follows the Orthodox doctrine cannot be a Croat. This would also confirm the thesis of the leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church that all Orthodox in the south-eastern European area are Serbs. Such theses would defend any Orthodox believer in Croatia from declaring himself a Croat (pp. 42-43). Kustić points out that is impossible not to notice the influence of Byzantine civilization on traditionally

Croatian areas, especially Dalmatia. This is evident, for example, in Catholic liturgical chants, church painting and Glagolitic writing. In Croatian lands we had a unique opportunity that the Roman Catholic Mass could be celebrated in the vernacular even before the Reformation. This, says Kustić, is the direct influence of Eastern, Byzantine Christianity (pp. 42-43). He then cites numerous examples of Croats throughout history who were not Catholic, and through them describes the formation of Croatian identity through a unique cultural synthesis: for example, Ante Starčević, the father of the Croatian Party of Rights, had an Orthodox mother; also Preradović, Demeter, Tesla, Šenoa, Penkala, Merz and etc. (pp. 127-130). This stand indicates his position that one not need to be Roman Catholic to be a good Croat.

Conclusion on Roman Catholic voices that challenged populist nationalism in Croatia

We can enumerate several principles held by Kuharić and other Roman Catholic officials regarding the popular nationalism of Tuđman. They strongly believed that the Church should be kept separate from politics; they saw the Church's role as justly proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples while upholding each person's human rights; and they saw the Church as the universal body of Christ rather than reducing it to specific ethnic communities. Kuharić was not entirely in favor of Tuđman's strategy for creating the Croatian State. He thought that not enough was being done to ensure that all of Croatia's residents had equal access to opportunities, rights, and justice. For these reasons, Kuharić frequently exhorts politicians to respect others and their national groups, and he denounced Tuđman's attempts to use the Church to further his limited political objectives. Additionally, our research revealed that, in contrast to populist nationalism, many religious authorities hold that Serbians and Croats share more in common than what separates them.

Evangelical voices in Croatia that challenged Croatian populist nationalism in the 1990s

Peter Kuzmič

From 1991 to 2000, Peter Kuzmič served as the president of the Protestant Evangelical Council in Croatia. He was the head of the Evangelical Pentecostal Church and the dean of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia. He is renowned for keeping regular connection with the authorities during this period and acting as an evangelical voice in public arena.

In his article "What Did I Tell Tuđman?", Kuzmic wrights what he told President Tuđman at the commemoration of the New Year 1996. From this article we can see what Kuzmič understood as the contribution of evangelical Christians to Croatian society. One of Kuzmič's theses is that evangelical Christians are Croatian bridge to the Western world (Kuzmič, 2017, 13). In this way Kuzmič describes evangelical Christians in Croatia as a contribution to the pluralization of Croatian society. This point is significant because it can be related to the Roman Catholic efforts for the dignity of every human being regardless of its national, religious, or racial belonging (pp. 13-14). Additionally, Kuzmič recalls the military operation commanded by Franjo Tuđman to liberate Croatian territory, as did Kuharić and the bishops earlier. Like Kuharić, Kuzmič believes that military action in Croatia is acceptable if it respects universal human rights (p. 14). In his opinion, the Croatian government is responsible for fostering and establishing peace (p. 14). Kuzmič sees this as another opportunity for evangelical Christianity to make a positive impact on Croatian society. Here, we can see Kuzmič's adherence to ecclesiastical writings like the CTC in its emphasis on peacebuilding.

Kuzmič connects the notion of peace with the biblical term shalom. It is not just the absence of war, but it is multidimensional. Kuzmič says: "Peace with God and peace in our

conscience needs to have an effect in peace between people and nations" (p. 14). That Shalom is, says Kuzmič, a synonym for happiness and well-being (p. 14). Kuzmič also uses the phrase "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to the people he loves" from Luke 2:14. This is not by chance. This is cited as a programmatic assertion for the development of a new humanity, both locally and globally. Glory to God and peace to the people are the main themes of this program (p. 13). Christ, according to Kuzmič, stands at the epicenter of human history and is the place of reconciliation between the nations. Sine Tuđman is a historian, this was appropriate. He uses John Paul II's words on creating a civilization of love. As stated in John 14:6 and 8:32, Kuzmič holds that only through the Truth, who is Jesus, can a civilization of love be build (p. 14). While congratulating President Tudjman on the New Year, Kuzmič wishes Croatia a bright future based on the principles of peace and prosperity, truth, justice, and freedom. He argues, one should steer clear of extremism, whether it be Nazi or Bolshevik. He calls for a free society where individuals and ideas can compete freely and equitably in matters of justice and truth while also engaging in critical thought and debating (p. 14).

By analyzing the thoughts Kuzmič is expressing, we can identify several similar voices to one Kuharić was espousing. For instance, Kuharić and Kuzmič both place a strong emphasis on the freedom and dignity of every individual. They denounce the crimes committed against Serbs during Operation Storm and emphasize the importance of the truth in achieving peace. Kuzmič particularly sees building of peace or shalom, as building a healthy nation and society. Centrality of Christ in this process of peace building is evangelical peculiarity. In this way, Kuzmič corresponds to evangelical documents such as the Cape town commitment. Also, he sees contribution of evangelical communities in Croatia through pluralism and the link to the west.

Miroslav Volf

The next significant evangelical voice in Croatia in the early 1990s was Miroslav Volf. He is significant because he was one of the widely respected Protestant theological voices in Croatian society during that period. Volf examines why religion often fails to fulfill its role in promoting peace among nations. He draws attention to instances in which religion leads to conflict, either directly or indirectly by its silence. He analyzes the theory of Thomas Hobbes, who as early as 1651 described three basic reasons why people engage in conflict and violence: "profit, security and prestige." The main reason therefore is in evil human nature (Volf 2015, pp. 27-28). Critics of religion argue that religion is the fourth cause of conflict. Defenders of religion admit this potential, but also assert that religion is ambivalent and that it all goes back to the people who abuse it, in accordance to their evil nature (pp. 27-28). Volf doesn't really agree with either of them. He argues that both fail to understand the real reasons why religions enter conflicts. According to him, it is the connection of religion with political power (pp. 29-30). Religions in the Balkans, from the early 1990s, were in that ordeal. Volf argues that in essence world religions are not political religions, but they become so in association with political power (p. 32). According to Volf, religions are associated with political power because they are not satisfied with their status as witnesses for the truth they believe in but want to use political power to impose their truth on opponents and defeat them (p. 30). The most important reason whether religion and its followers will end up in conflict is the level to which religion is identified with a particular political project and its political proponents (p. 33). The key question for Volf is what prevails over religion and its believers and leaders: identification with a political project or identification with its true essence? If identification with a political project prevails it is certain that this will end in conflict. If its inner essence prevails it will become a factor of peace (pp. 33-34). And at this point, Volf poses a dilemma: should religions then avoid public engagement and become part of the

private sphere? For Volf, political identification and public engagement are not the same. Religion can enrich politics and public discourse, and yet not identify with it. Volf gives examples of Chile, Indonesia, the Philippines and Poland. In order not to succumb to the temptation of political identification and thus the legitimacy of violence, according to Volf, religions need to nurture a healthy independence from political power and remain authentic to itselves so as not to become a "political or cultural" resource (p. 34).

In his book *Public Faith,* Volf, distinguishes between thick and thin religions. Thick are those who are faithful to their essence and thus enrich societies, and thin are those who identify with society and thus serve neither themselves nor society (p. 34). We can connect this elaboration about a healthy relationship between religion and politics with Kuharič's efforts in distinguishing Church from politics. Unfortunately, we do not have only good examples of these relationships in the Balkans. Kuzmič refer to this problem among national churches that arose after the advent of democracy in Eastern Europe: churches tried to return to a "quasi-Constantine model of church-state relations" (Kuzmič 2012, p. 87). Kuzmič explains how the national Churches after the fall of communism, after many years of persecution, found themselves in rather strange circumstances where former communist rulers, now self-pronounced democrat, gave them such unreserved support and public privileges that cannot be compared to situation in other democratic societies (p. 87). Kuzmič says that the change from "communist ideology" to "nationalist ideology" led to a partially justified discovery of "ethno-religious identities", but the change from "totalitarianism to tribal mentality" called into question democratic processes and human rights, especially of vulnerable minorities (p. 87). In essence, Kuzmič points to the incompetence of the churches in the new democratic circumstances and to the pursuit of the myth and political ideology of politicians. Such a relationship has had a particular impact on reducing democratic processes and minority rights.

Volf argues that the Christian's relationship to the other and different in the world around us should be inspired by the cross of Christ. For Volf, the Cross is at the center of Christian action (Volf 1996, pp. 22-25). In this way, Volf follows the spirit of CTC, which place Christ and his cross at the center of relations with other nations. Looking at the cross, Volf claims, we look at the crucified one who has spread his arms by accepting each of us unconditionally, regardless of our sins and antagonism towards him. And in that picture follows the center of Volf's argument: Openness to the other precedes any of our judgments about the other (pp. 22-25). Before we make any judgment about the other we need to accept him as a human being. In this way Wolf sees the need to first identify with the other, inspired by the cross, in the fact of his humanity (pp. 22-25). In this statement, we can also recognize the similarity with the Roman Catholic attitude that when we think of the other, we first consider humanity - the image of God (pp. 22-25). This is Volf's contribution as evangelical Christian to the Croatian context. The contribution of the evangelicals in the Croatian context is openness to others and to different, following the example of Christ on the cross. Centrality of Christ and his cross is a leading point in our relation to others. This is the life of reconciliation. In this way, the evangelical movement contributes to pluralization in Croatian society (p. 29). But the question remains: what will happen to truth and justice if we just open ourselves to others? We remember how cardinal Kuharić continuously emphasized truth and justice as a prerequisite for co-existence. These themes dominate the prophetic literature: Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 6.14. The basis of the argument lies with the idea that truth and justice, and consequently peace, should be sought in community with others and different. There is no unilateral justice and truth. Once again, the contribution of evangelical Christians in Croatia should be exactly in indicating the voices of others and different, and not one-minded. Volf's main argument is in line with Nietzsche's thought that there is too much untruth and injustice in the one-sided search for truth and justice (p. 29). This, according to

Volf, is the wisdom of the cross: in our society, truth and justice are inseparable from the effort to embrace another (p. 29). On the other hand, the embrace, which in fact represents reconciliation, cannot come fully until the truth is uttered and justice done.

Volf argues, there is a dialectic between grace or embrace and the demand for truth and justice. Grace has priority, but it is conditioned by accepting the embrace, and allowing God to bring judgment on the injustice and lies of false prophets (p. 30). The practice of embracing is the only weapon in the fight against the evil we call exclusion, and it is possible when we renounce the right to ourselves and our culture in the name of another in the name of Christ. Volf elaborates Moltman's idea of solidarity with the weaker here, but Volf also calls for solidarity with the enemy. Christian action in the world toward the other should reflect God's openness to us on the cross: Outstretched arms for the other, waiting for a reaction, embracing the other, and letting go — letting the other be what he is (p. 22-25). What remains is the promise of the cross, and it is in the empty tomb. When we are in the company of the crucified we will have communion with him and in the power of the empty tomb (p. 29).

Conclusion on Evangelical voices that challenged populist nationalism in Croatia

The evangelical emphasis is that the cross of Christ should be at the heart of our actions in society. On the cross, Christ extended his hands to us. Before bringing any judgment about individuals, we should accept them. Volf and Kuzmič agree in their conclusions on the role of the evangelical movement in Croatia in the context of the pluralization of society, the building of peace and centrality of Christ and his cross. The evangelical attitude consists in the call to put an end to all exclusivity and unanimity and allow the Croatian context to be blessed with a plural approach to reality, truth, and justice. There is no reconciliation if the two sides do not experience healing. If all a society's members do not perceive their country as a place where people are free to hold differing views and live in harmony with them, then there is no genuine truth in that society.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW IN THE AREA OF CROATIAN POPULIST NATIONALISM AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSES

Introduction to literature review for this research

The three works I analyze here are respectively specialized within different areas of research question I am answering in this thesis: Are there common theological elements among Croatian religious leaders that counter Croatian populist nationalism? They do not cover all aspects of my research. They remain contribution to this research. However, they deal with the following areas: work that analyze the awakening of Croatian nationalism during the 1990s: Bellamy, A. J. (2003). *The formation of Croatian national identity*; work dealing with the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church during 1990s: Barunčić, P. J. (2014). *The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991 - 1995: Attitudes, Action, and Suffering*; and a work dealing with the attitude of the evangelical community in the 1990s in the neighboring country of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Goodwin, S.R. (2006). *Fractured Land, Healing Nations*.

The importance of these works for my thesis is different. Bellamy deals with three key themes that are important in a better understanding of my thesis. First, he describes The Croatian historical statehood narrative, which refers to the theoretical foundations of Tuđman's work and the nature of his nationalism. Then he presents various contemporary accounts of Croatian national identity. This part deals with the practical analysis of different ideas and visions of what the Croatian state should look like, and how it was imagined by various political and other leaders in Croatia during the 1990s. Finally, Bellamy also analyzes the attitude of the Catholic Church in Croatia during the 1990s. Therefore, this work helps to better understand the nature of populist nationalism during the 1990s, Tuđman's idea of the

Croatian state, as well as other competitive political visions. It also helps me understand the attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the Croatian populist nationalism of the 1990s.

Barunčić deals specifically with the activities and role of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia during the period of the Homeland War between 1991 and 1995 and the role and activities of Cardinal Kuharić as leader of the Catholic Church in Croatia and its first man during the Homeland War. These two topics are important in the context of the problem of this thesis. It helps to better understand attitude of the Catholic Church in Croatia with regard to the populist nationalism of the 1990s and Tuđman's vision of the Croatian state.

Goodwin analyzes the joint voices of different religious leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics, regarding peace building and social renewal. His book, although considers the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is important for this thesis for several reasons. First, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were part of one SFRY state from 1945 to 1991 and thus share a common history and cultural heritage. Croatia declared independence in 1991, and BiH in 1992. Both countries participated in war events during this process. A significant community of Croats lives in BiH, which are also a constitutive people in BiH according to the BiH constitution, together with the Bosniak and Serbian peoples. That community, in the struggle for its position in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was influenced by Tuđman's vision and politics. Among other things, Godwin examines the reaction of Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to Tuđman's policy, which covers the area of research that this thesis deals with. Also, this book is the only research of this kind that includes evangelical voices with regard to Tuđman's politics, and that is why it is of significance for this thesis.

The nature of Tuđman's populist nationalism

Bellamy clearly states his methodology and thesis in the introduction of his work. He points out that he will follow Paul James' theory of 'abstract communities'. This theory states that national identity is built on three levels: the level of great stories, the level of interpretation of these stories by politicians and elites, and the level of application of these interpretations by various social factors (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 1-3). Important for this thesis is that Bellamy analyzes the interpretation of the Croatian grand narrative by Tuđman and the HDZ in chapter 4, and in chapter 6 he analyzes the reception of that theory by the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia. Bellamy claims that in the first 5 years of the 1990s, this interpretation was mostly poorly commented on due to the events of the war. However, from 1995 there were increasingly strong voices opposing it. Bellamy also presents Catholic Church voices that in part accept Tuđman's interpretation of the grand narative, but also those voices that oppose it (pp. 1-3). The basic thesis Bellamy claims is that in the early 1990s, several political options appeared on the political scene that built their program and represented a certain idea of what the Croatian state should look like, based on Croatia's grand narative, that is, the thesis of centuries-old Croatian statehood. They built on that story to legitimize their political program or to compete with other political options (p. 65).

Tuđman's tendency was to identify the HDZ program, his person and the Croatian people (p. 66). His vision was that the HDZ would not be a party but a movement that would unite every spectrum of Croatian political ideology and society. Idea was to unite all parts of Croatian society in order to achieve one goal: an independent and sovereign state of Croatia. In order to achieve this, he did not see problematic to bring together different ideologues of Croatian identity, such as Strossmayer and Gay, pan-Slavists; Stjepan Radić, a pacifist and trilateralist within the Habsburg Monarchy; and Ante Starčević and Ante Pavelić, a pro-fascist (pp. 66-68). To strengthen his goal, he tried to position the Croats against others, specifically

the Serbs. He pointed out that Croats differ from Serbs in terms of culture, history and geography. He pointed out that it was a civilizational difference between East and West, which made Yugoslavia as a common state an impossible illusion (pp. 68-69).

Furthermore he strived to unite the Croats in the homeland with those in the diaspora. In order to achieve this, he had presented a common narrative about the suffering of the Croatian people during communist Yugoslavia. He believed that Yugoslavia was responsible for economic, social and demographic problems. Second, he should somehow rehabilitated Ante Pavelić, the leader of the Croatian pro-fascist movement during World War II (Ustasha), because the vast majority of Croats in the diaspora were descendants of fugitive members of that regime. It is likely that Tuđman wanted to include them for financial support, not so much for ideological reasons. However, in order to make them feel welcome, he claimed three things: Serbs exaggerated the Ustasha crimes during II. World War, which he advocated in his book *Horrors of War*; he claimed that Croatian pro-fascist state during World War II. was a legitimate expression of the aspirations of the Croatian people for their own state, even though it ended badly; and he changed the names of streets and places to erase the memory of Tito and communism and to rehabilitate some figures with whom the diaspora identified (pp. 69-70). Bellamy is particularly concerned because Tuđman, in his project of reconciliation and unification of Croats, emphasized his anti-communism more than he emphasized his anti-fascism even though he himself was a participant in the anti-fascist struggle (p. 71).

He also points out the following three efforts by which Tuđman wanted to realize his political program and vision for the Croatian state. This was the focus on Croatian independence, exclusive approach to citizenship and the promotion of conservative clericalism (p. 71). Sovereignty and independence were the elements by which Tuđman was able to unite the different spectrums of Croatian society. But for Bellamy question remains what kind of sovereignty Tuđman proposed. Did it refer only to the internationally recognized

borders of the Republic of Croatia or also for the regions where Croats lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With certain statements, he gave signs that he not only supports the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also advocated the annexation of Herzegovina to the Croatian state, claims Bellamy (pp. 71-73). The specific interpretation of the grand narrative about the centuries-old dream for Croatian state is also visible in the specific approach to citizenship. Bellamy claims that although the constitution guarantees human freedoms and rights not only to Croats, but also to national minorities including Serbs, the Law on citizenship, especially articles 8 and 26, were used in the 1990s to deny certain Serbs their right to citizenship. Such an attempt points to a specific interpretation of centuries-old dream that sees the Croatian state exclusively as a manifestation of the Croatian ethnic community (pp. 73-74). Way Tuđman promoted conservative clericalism and how did it fit into his vision of the Croatian state Bellamy explains in following words:

> The HDZ's interpretation of the historical statehood thesis was also evident in its overt clericalism. While Orthodoxy shaped the Serb national consciousness, Catholicism did not play a significant role in the historical statehood thesis. Indeed, national heroes, such as Jelačić, Archbishop Strossmayer and Stjepan Radić, either vehemently opposed clericalism (Radić), promoted ecumenicalism (Strossmayer) or emphasized the political rather than religious nature of the nation (Jelačić). Tuđman, however, propagated clericalism and promoted the Catholic Church as the moral conscience of his Croatian nation in order to differentiate Croats from the Serbs, Bosnian Muslims and Yugoslavists, and hence provide a foundation for a unified Croatia. (p. 74)

Bellamy's basic criticism of Tuđman's populist nationalism and interpretation of the centuries-old dream of Croatian statehood is that in his efforts to unite the Croatian people, and his efforts to unite the left and right wing, in most cases he was more inclined to support the right wing of his members who, for example, wanted to unite parts of Herzegovina with

Croatia and create an ethnically pure and Catholic state. He did not use his involvement in the anti-fascist struggle to its full potential (p. 74). This part of Bellamy's work helps us define the nature of Tuđman's populist nationalism. Bellamy observes Tuđman's nationalism through his interpretation of the grand narrative centuries old dream for Croatian state. The goal of Tuđman's interpretation was to unite all spectrums of the Croatian national being, from left to extreme right political options. He did this through: trying to unite Croatian identity in opposition to others, Serbs; by unification of Croats in the homeland and diaspora through the description of common suffering during Yugoslavia and the partial rehabilitation of the NDH; through vision for Croatian sovereignty including also Croats in BiH; a specific description of citizenship that sought to limit the rights of Serbs; and the promotion of conservative clericalism that distinguished what it mean to be Croat through its religious affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church. Bellamy's basic criticism was that Tuđman, in these efforts, mostly favored and defended the right-wing extremist sphere of the Croatian national corpus. Did the religious leaders in Croatia notice this? How did they respond to such interpretations of the Croatian state and society? Are there common voices in these challenges? We will now analyze the part of Bellamy's work that deals with the analysis of the reaction of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church to Tuđman's populist nationalism.

As we mentioned earlier, Tuđman used his narrative of the suffering of the Croatian people during communist Yugoslavia to unite the Croatian people. He claimed that the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia was the only institution during communist Yugoslavia that continuously resisted the communist authorities, defended the interests of the Croatian people and nurtured their national identity (p. 156). It is important to note, in relation to this thesis, that Bellamy does not only cite voices within the Church that challenged populist nationalism. In fact, he also names those who agreed with Tuđman's vision of the Croatian state and his interpretation of Croatian identity. For example he quotes Ilija Živković, secretary assistant of

the Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops (HBK) from October 1994, who claimed that the Church was the voice of the Croatian people and nurturer of its identity. Also he is mentioning Josip Beljan, member of the editorial board of the Journal Church on the Stone and professor of pastoral care at the Theological Institute in Mostar from 1990, who said that in this period the cross of Christ stood right next to the Croatian flag. Moreover, he also describes Cardinal Kuharić in this light as the one who claimed that the Church should find its expression in the state in order to stand well with its people (p. 156). Nevertheless, Bellamy points out that there was a strong debate in the Church on how to relate to the program of Tuđman and the HDZ. They were particularly critical of his attitudes towards minorities, corruption and crime. The debate was especially between priests in urban areas who were more strongly opposed to Tuđman's populist nationalism and priests in rural areas who largely agreed with hard nationalism and conservative Catholicism (p. 156).

According to Bellamy, the Church saw its existence during the two Yugoslavias as a period of suffering under the domination of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Considering this thesis, we see that it was not difficult to identify the sufferings of the Roman Catholic Church with the sufferings of the Croatian people, which Tuđman later advocated (p. 157). Bellamy brings out two challenges faced by the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia during that period. The first is related with the need to defend itself as an institution and the Croatian people from the propaganda coming from Belgrade. The second is proving that Croatia has the right to independence and statehood (p. 158).

Bellamy observes that in the early 1990s, the Roman Catholic Church supported the HDZ as a party and the independence of Croatia. He states that this support was based on the impression that the HDZ is a movement of the entire Croatian people and that it stands up for democracy, that it will overthrow the heavy communist rule and liberate the church. However, he emphasizes that although many priests supported the creation of the HDZ and supported

the HDZ in the elections, the church hierarchy never openly supported the HDZ (p. 158). There was a big split over the correct relationship between the Church and the state. Tuđman believed that the Roman Catholic Church was the Croatian Church, while the Vatican understands the Roman Catholic Church as the universal church of all nations (Bellamy, 2003, 159). Bellamy cites two authors who described the activities of the Church as identified with the activities of Tuđman and HDZ, for example Paul Mojzes and Croatian sociologist Srđan Vrcan. However, Bellamy thinks that this is not a fair presentation of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church. Although there were priests who fully supported Tuđman's rhetoric, the great majority, led by cardinal Kuharić, initially moderately supported the HDZ as a movement, while later they openly criticized Croatian ethnic nationalism, crimes committed by the Croatian armed forces, and the demonization of Serbs (p. 159). Bellamy points out that the evolution, for example, is visible in the reactions of Kuharić. He supported the right of the Croatian army to liberate the occupied territories of Croatia from the Serbian side. He claimed that Tuđman had repeatedly begged the Serbian population in those areas to stay. However, after learning about certain crimes committed by the Croatian army on Serbian civilians, Kuharić openly criticized such crimes (p. 160).

One of the turning points was the visit of John Paul II. to Zagreb in 1994. This visit was initially planned as a peace visit to Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. However, the Pope was not allowed to visit Belgrade and Sarajevo, only Zagreb remained. The Pope initially praised Stepinac and condemned the Serbian destruction of Vukovar, Dubrovnik and Zadar. However, he cautioned the government against using the Church for its own narrow nationalist goals and warned against making idols out of nation, race and party. He condemned the policy of the Croatian government in BiH, as well as putting the Croatian nation at the center of its policy (p. 161). Furthermore, Jure Krišto, Croatian historian, claimed that the conflict had to break out since the Church from the beginning promoted the

true meaning of democracy and the human rights of every person, which was not really evident in the ruling party. Cardinal Kuharić's sermons after Operation Storm questioned Tuđman's attitude towards "Serbs". His emphasis was that we cannot respond in same kind (p. 162).

According to Bellamy, the Roman Catholic Church played a key role in shaping the Croatian identity in the early 1990s, but not the one Tuđman and the HDZ wanted to attribute to it. Since the Church preserved the Croatian identity during the communist regime of Yugoslavia and since it itself went through suffering and persecution by the communist authorities, it was not strange that the nationalists assigned it a key role, but also that the Church itself initially stood by the HDZ because it saw it as a strength of the Croatian people in the fight against communism and for democracy. Once again, it is important to repeat here that although priests from rural areas identified with Tuđman's politics, such an attitude never came from the hierarchy of the Church, which moreover distanced itself from any narrow ethno-centric attitudes (p. 163). Nevertheless, Bellamy provides general views on the activities of the Church during the 1990s, without major details on the activities and views of priests, the hierarchy and Cardinal Kuharić himself. For this reason, the following work by Barunčić is important for our thesis and understanding of the positions of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia on populist nationalism in that period.

Attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia toward the events in the 1990s in Croatia

The doctoral thesis of Julija Barunčić Pletikosić, *The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991 -1995: Attitudes, Action, and Suffering*, defended at the University of Zagreb in 2014, under the mentorship of Miroslav Akmadža, analyzes the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia in the period from 1991.-1995. year, especially analyzing the statements of the Croatian Bishops' Conference, and the statements of important

representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, such as Cardinal Kuharić. Analyzing official documents and statements of the Roman Catholic Church, the author tries to determine its influence on domestic and foreign political and social factors (Barunčić, 2014, V). Regarding this thesis, the description of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church on domestic political factors, or specifically Tuđman's policy, is particularly interesting. Also, an interesting part of this paper is the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church with the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Holy See, i.e., Pope John Paul II.

Since the activities of the Roman Catholic Church during communist Yugoslavia and in the first years of the creation of the Republic of Croatia have been described by Bellamy, in the context of the Church's suffering during the communist era and the Church's initial support to Tuđman and the HDZ in the creation of a free and democratic Croatia, here I would like to focus on the activities of the Roman Catholic Church and Cardinal Kuharić during and after the liberation war Operation Storm led by the Croatian army with the aim of liberating the occupied territories by Serbian authorities and armed units. That part is covered in chapters 4.6, 5.1, and 5.2. Barunčić briefly describes the state of war and the situation in which the Croatian state found itself during the 1990s. Namely, one third of the Croatian territory was under the occupation of rebel citizens of Serbian nationality who held that territory, not accepting the separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia and demanding its stronger integration with the Republic of Serbia, at the same time expelling about 296 thousand citizens of Croatian nationality from those territories in 1991. The Croatian military forces carried out several military operations during 1995, specifically Operation Flash on May 1 and 2, and Operation "Storm" from August 4 to 10, returning most of these territories to the constitutional legal order and internationally recognized borders, except for the part of Eastern Slavonia that was later returned by a peace agreement (Barunčić, 2014, p. 89).

Before referring to the positions of the Croatian Bishops' Conference and other officials of the Roman Catholic Church on this issue, Barunčić gives the general positions of the Roman Catholic Church on military operations based on the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope) adopted at the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI. et. al. in 1965. The constitution says that war operations are justified if they are undertaken to preserve "human rights, freedoms and peace". But this does not mean that they are justified in any situation. They are justified only when all possible negotiations for an agreement and the establishment of peace have been exhausted (as cited in Barunčić et. al., 2014, p. 89).

Barunčić points out that the Roman Catholic Church did not specifically comment on Operation Flash, but certain bishops welcomed it, believing that it would enable the return of expelled civilians to occupied areas, the reconstruction and normal functioning of parishes in those areas. On the other hand, they gave public statements during and after Operation Storm. Especially Cardinal Kuharić, for example, on August 5, 1995, on the daily news of Croatian television, with the view that the operation is justified if it is carried out in compliance with all the principles stated in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. According to it, every state has the right to legitimate defense, after exhausting all possibilities for peace negotiations, if it defends human rights, freedom, and peace (Barunčić, 2014, p. 90). The Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops made an official statement from its extraordinary session on August 8, 1995. There, Kuharić's views are generally repeated and the destroyed Roman Catholic buildings in the territory occupied until then by the Serbian authorities are described (pp. 92-93).

But what was the position of the Roman Catholic Church and Cardinal Kuharić on the refugee Serbs and the crimes committed against them? Barunčić talks about this by citing the sermon of Cardinal Kuharić in Hrastovica near Petrinja on August 24, 1995 (p. 94). In that sermon, Kuharić warned everyone, especially the soldiers and those in charge, not to commit

violence in the liberated territory, that is, to respect the human rights and freedoms of every citizen in the liberated territory, regardless of their national and religious affiliation. Although he stood by the principles of the pastoral constitution of *Gaudium et Spes* in the context of the right of the Croatian state and the army to defend and liberate its occupied territory, he clearly called on the soldiers not to take justice into their own hands and not to commit violence against a single citizen, including citizens of Serbian nationality (p. 94). Also in the context of the military Operation Storm, the commission "Iustitia et pax" gave its statement. The Commission reiterated the views expressed by Cardinal Kuharić regarding the principles of the pastoral constitution of *Gaudium et Spes* and expressed regret that as a result of the military operation, even if not directly, the departure of a large number of citizens of Serbian nationality, as a result of coercion by the local Serbian authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church. They called on the government of the Republic of Croatia to respect all human rights and freedoms in the liberated areas and to provide conditions for the return of refugees of Serbian nationality. The statement was signed by the president of the commission, Marko Culej (p. 95). The fact that numerous priests of the Roman Catholic Church were aware of the crimes committed by individual soldiers and civilians against citizens of Serbian nationality is indicated by numerous sermons of some priests in this context. For example, that of Šibenik bishop Srećko Badurina on the feast of the Assumption (August 15) in 1995 in Vrpolje near Šibenik. He said that every sin should be condemned, regardless of who committed it and against whom (p. 96).

On October 17, 1995, a meeting with Pope John Paul II. and bishops from the territory of the former Yugoslavia was held in Vatican. At that meeting, the bishops signed, Archdiocese of Zagreb et. al. in 1995, among other things, the following guidelines for action in the territory of the former Yugoslavia:

> They undertook tasks for future service in their religious communities, among which they particularly emphasized the task of strengthening reconciliation between people and ethnic groups, calling on them to "reject the myth of embittered nationalism and to nurture healthy patriotism, thus encouraging sincere coexistence", teaching them to live " Christian forgiveness in order to heal the wounds produced by hatred"; instructing them to work on strengthening dialogue and mutual respect with Orthodox believers at the local, national and regional level, as well as with Muslim believers, and on the restoration of all sacred buildings that have been destroyed by war, "because these are signs of hope and means of community..." These were the most important guidelines addressed to all believers of the Catholic Church, but also to all citizens of the newly created states in the territory of the former Yugoslavia for a future peaceful coexistence which, as the Church believes, must first of all be based on the protection of the fundamental human rights and dignity of each person in order to built a new, fairer society and a peaceful common life of all peoples in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, regardless of their religious and national affiliation. (as cited in in Barunčić et. al., 2014, pp. 100-101)

From the official statements and the statements of individual leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, evident is an effort to respect the principles of the pastoral constitution of The Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops *Gaudium et Spes*, which means justifying the Croatian war of liberation, but also calling for respecting human rights and freedoms for every person, which includes citizens of Serbian nationality on territory of the Republic of Croatia. It was encouraged that, regardless of the evil committed, not to seek revenge, but to allow the rule of law to do its work.

There are several principles of Pope John Paul II. which Barunčić mentions, where is possible to read different vision of the Croatian state than the one cultivated by Tuđman's

populist national policy. The Pope states et. al. in 1991 that it is not possible to resolve the conflicts that exist between two nations with war, for it continues to fuel hatred and revenge. Therefore, the Pope is praying for a peaceful and just solution to the conflict, for peace for the Croats, for peace for the Serbs and all other peoples of the former Yugoslavia (as cited in Barunčić, et. al., 2014, p. 154). It is significant that in his letter to the Croatian Catholic bishops, the Pope calls the Serbs "Orthodox brothers", pointing out all those common elements that exist not only between two religions, but also between two nations, which is contrary to Tuđman's thesis about two civilizational opposite nations. The Pope et. al. in 1991 calls on the bishops that their love knows no borders, but to seek peace for everyone, because this is the only way to build the future of Croatia as a country where every person will feel protected, regardless of whether they are of Croatian or Serbian nationality (as cited in Barunčić, et. al., 2014, p. 155). These messages call for Croatia not to become a country of only one people, but a country for all citizens who want to live in it and whose full human rights and freedoms will be respected. Pope John Paul II. also sees dialogue, forgiveness, and reconciliation as prerequisites for lasting peace and the future. He sent a letter with such content both to the bishops in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and to Serbian Patriarch Pavle. Such efforts are important, because they indicate common voices to the efforts done by evangelical leaders in Croatia, led by Kuzmič, and the Roman Catholic leaders (Barunčić, 2014, pp. 155-156).

Cardinal Kuharić advocated for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this effort, he did not put fences on the basis of national and religious affiliation, which we see here, in Blažević et. al. in 1993:

> For example, when on December 23, 1992, in Zagreb, in the Islamic Center, a prayer meeting was held in solidarity with all the people and nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in accordance with the call in the appeal for peace from the

> interconfessional meeting of religious leaders from the former Yugoslavia in November 1992 in Ermatingen in Switzerland, which was attended by representatives of the Jewish, Lutheran, Baptist and Muslim communities in addition to Cardinal Kuharić and Croatian Catholic bishops - members of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Kuharić repeated on that occasion, after all, as he had done many times before, that regardless of religious diversity, everyone's common prayer for peace because "peace is the need of all people of good will, of all the oppressed, persecuted, wounded", as well as the peacemakers, regardless of which religion they belong to, all those "who resolutely stand on the side of justice, freedom, respecting human rights and protecting the dignity of the human person... all those who distinguish between an innocent victim and an unjust attacker and who can never approve of violence against a person and any people, who cannot but condemn injustice and crime. (as cited in Barunčić et. al., 2014, p. 119)

Kuharić was critical of the crime committed, regardless of the nationality of the person who committed it and to whom it was committed, in Blažević et. al. in 1993:

> In the said appeal, Cardinal Kuharić referred to the conflicts between Croats and Bosniaks that began in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 1992, that is, in Herzegovina and central Bosnia, and were stopped by the signing of the Washington Agreement on March 18, 1994. And that conflict, as interpreted by Cardinal Kuharić, was characterized by crimes, murders and the expulsion of a large number of people from their homes and from their hearths, i.e. that war was also "a war against every right, against every political wisdom, against the freedom of one and others, against the lives of both. And that conflict is a crime for which those who started it must be held accountable. Whoever it was, bears responsibility before God and before the world! Whoever commits a crime is responsible for the crime. There are no such goals

> or those interests, even if they were presented as justified, that would excuse the crimes", was the opinion of Cardinal Kuharić, but also a call to awaken the consciousness of those who started and committed the crimes. That is why, in this appeal, the cardinal addresses several times his request to all participants in the conflict to stop hostilities and establish peace "in sincere and true respect for the rights of every human person, regardless of religious or national affiliation. (as cited in Barunčić et. al., 2014, p. 119)

Although in this section Barunčić states Kuharić's position on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the position of condemning every crime committed regardless of nationality and religion, Barunčić does not directly point out Kuharić's criticism of Tuđman's policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as her mentor Akmadža does in his work, which we previously analyzed in chapter two.

Barunčić in her analysis of the visit of Pope John Paul II. to Croatia on September 11, 1994, states Pope's views from which we can read the voices challenging the official policy of Tuđman and the HDZ at that time. The Pope states that his original intention was not only to visit Zagreb, but also neighboring countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (Barunčić, 2014, p. 163). In his speech, the Pope directly addressed the representatives of the authorities of the Republic of Croatia, urging them to promote a culture of peace that does not reject healthy patriotism, but avoids nationalist extremism (p. 164). In his introductory greeting and address to Tuđman and Kuharić, the Pope greeted all citizens of the Republic of Croatia, as well as non-Catholic Christian communities, especially members of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Islamic and Jewish communities (p. 164). The Pope further points out that for centuries the peoples of the Balkans have accepted each other and had various cultural, linguistic and other exchanges, as well as religious coexistence, which in itself is a pledge of future peace and coexistence. Therefore, it is also the right of every nation to its independence

and self-determination, but also to federal association with others (pp. 164-165). During his visit, the Pope emphasized a certain vision of society in Croatia, which was a challenge to the official policy of Tuđman and the HDZ, as well as to their vision of the Croatian state. This is especially highlighted in pointing out the difference between healthy patriotism and extreme nationalism, pointing out that Croatia is not only a country of the Roman Catholic religion, but that citizens of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Islamic and Jewish communities who have lived and contributed here for centuries, and that the peoples of the Balkans have had a cultural and civilizational exchange, which indicates that they are directed towards each other, and not irreversibly separated, as Tuđman emphasized on several occasions.

In his work, Barunčić also mentions Cardinal Kuharić's address in the office of President Tuđman in early 1995, and that after the visit of Pope John Paul II. Kuharić summarized the Pope's message as an appeal for just peace and life among people and nations. A just peace includes the correction of every injustice, which includes the restoration of the hearth and the return of every refugee and exiled person, including respect for the human rights and freedom of every person (p. 166). From this speech, Kuharić's tendency towards Tuđman’s politics is visible, pointing out to him that a just peace includes respect for the human rights of every person, regardless of his nationality and religious affiliation.

Analyzing this work by Barunčić, we can conclude that the author's intention was not so much to get into the views of the Roman Catholic Church on the politics of Tuđman and the HDZ. The author focuses on reactions, statements and attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church regarding war events during the war in Croatia in the 1990s. During this process, the author mainly analyzes the positions of the Croatian Bishops' Conference, Cardinal Kuharić and Pope John Paul II. with regard to war in general, war operations, the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church towards the Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church, and only partially towards political and social relations.

Evangelical and Roman Catholic voices in Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning nationalist tendencies in the 1990s

Stephen R. Goodwin's research consists of theoretical and empirical research. He did the theoretical part in the library and on the Internet with the purpose of analyzing the history and current issues of the Balkans in general and Bosnia and Herzegovina specifically. Empirical research consisted of various interviews in Bosnia and Herzegovina with three basic groups: religious representatives, women and students. The questions for the religious representatives concerned their everyday issues with an emphasis on the religious, theological, philosophical and ideological spheres of reconciliation. He avoided questions that would directly concern the war conflict. He interviewed the women with the aim of finding out the relational topics, since the men were focused on structural topics. The students were interesting to him because they represented a group that lives in a new multi-religious and multi-national context, unlike the Yugoslav one, and looks towards the future. There were basically three types of questions: fundamental, empirical, and theological (Goodwin, 2006, pp. 5-7). In my analysis of Goodwin's work, I will focus on his research concerning religious voices in relation to the issue of the situation in the Balkans in the period of the 1990s and their view of reconciliation between different people groups. Among the religious voices, Goodwin, considering the context in Bosnia and Herzegovina, examines the religious representatives of four confessions: Muslim, Serbian Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Evangelical. Considering my inters in the Croatian context, my focus is mainly on representatives of the Roman Catholic and Evangelical confessions. This part of Goodwin's research is particularly interesting for my research question because it deals not only with Roman Catholic religious voices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also with Evangelical religious voices with regard to the situation in the Balkans in the 1990s, which directly and indirectly influenced the political situation in Croatia. This is obvious because Tuđman's

policy in Croatia also influenced the policy of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, the issue of reconciliation between peoples in the Balkans, and the views of Evangelical leaders on that issue, is a topic that was a challenge to Tuđman's narrative.

The problem that Goodwin deals within his work, and which concerns my research, are different political and social visions of what society in Bosnia and Herzegovina should look like, as well as the state itself. BiH shares a similar fate as Croatia, as one of the former Yugoslav states. Just two years later, it declared independence from Yugoslavia. However, its political and social situation is even more complicated than that of Croatia, because three constituent peoples live in Bosnia: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats; and we have three major religious groups, Islamic, Serbian Orthodox and Roman Catholic.

Goodwin cites an interview with Mato Zovkić, a Roman Catholic priest from BiH, as an example. Zovkić claims that in BiH there is a problem of equating religious and national identity. Zovkić sees himself as a pluralist in the spirit of the II. Vatican Council and says that his problem is created by his followers of the Croatian nationality who, as a Roman Catholic, expect him to fight for the "Croatian cause". Zovkić says that if we put our ethnic identity before our sincere faith, there is a danger of becoming radical nationalists (Goodwin, 2006, p. 108). Here we can read a voice that challenges Tuđman's idea to identify the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia with the Croatian people and put it at the service of Croatian nationalism. For Zovkić, the Roman Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be reduced to Croatian ethnicity and culture. On the other hand, Zovkić confirms Bellamy's thesis that in the Balkans religious affiliation was identified with national affiliation and was used for narrow nationalist purposes.

Goodwin goes on to quote the Franciscan Ivo Marković who says that in the Balkans, politicians make artificial distinctions between peoples in order to emphasize the differences between different nation groups. He gives language as an example. However, he sees these as

artificial differences. Such voices once again challenge Tuđman's thesis about the insurmountable differences between Croats and Serbs (p. 108). Furthermore, Goodwin cites the Franciscan Marko Oršolić. He claims that the key to dialogue in the Balkans is dialogue between religions that have become too burdened with traditionalism because they have not fully accepted the achievements of the Enlightenment, human rights and humanism. As an exception, he mentions educated clerics and the very top of the church. Why, according to him, are religions crucial for dialogue? Because religions are so fatally identified with the nations in the Balkans (p. 116). These are the voices that become a challenge not just so much to Tuđman's thesis about the connection between the Roman Catholic Church and the Croatian peop le, but for the bad consequences of such a reality.

Goodwin sees a similar line of thought between the Roman Catholic Franciscan Oršolić, the Evangelical leader Kuzmič and the Serbian Orthodox priest Radujković. Their understanding is that all people have the same origin. This means that their first identity is universal human identity because they are all created in the image of God. We have again voices that challenge Tuđman's thesis about the insurmountable difference between Croats and Serbs (p. 117). Evangelical leader Bernard Mikulić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Čapljina, thinks similarly. He describes that because of his encounter with Christ, he now has a new identity that transcends other identities that are tied to political views, ethnic groups, and religious creeds. Although he is no longer a Catholic, he continues to be a Croat. Belonging to Christ is now his primary identity and gives him a different perspective on social realities (p. 118). This view is the voice that challenges Tuđman's thesis because being a Croat does not necessarily connect with belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Another Evangelical leader, Nikola Škrinjarić, claims similarly. His new identity in Christ gave him a new perspective on belonging to the nation. He condemns the attitude that one nation is better than another. Whether someone does evil or good is a matter of personal decision of the

individual (p. 119). This is also the voice that challenges Tuđman's thesis that the Croatian people have more culture than the Serbian people. Karmelo Krešonja, pastor of the evangelical church in Mostar, points out that because of the Christian's new identity in Christ, he continues to inherit his national identity, but it is no longer primary in his life. His belonging to Christ is now his primary identity (p. 120). Krešonja highlights this attitude as an important pastoral and evangelistic aspect. Namely, when they have an evangelization campaign, they send three people of different nationalities to the street: Croat, Serb and Bosniak. When people see how these people function together, they are shocked (p. 120). Krešonja believes that a new identity in Christ can transform our belief and behavior towards others and those who are different (p. 121). This attitude is a challenge to Tuđman's thesis that two peoples cannot live together, but it is also a good model for the mission and evangelization activity of the Church in the context of Balkan.

In the following, Goodwin analyzes the views of religious leaders on the relationship between religion and politics. There are religious leaders who believe that through involvement in politics they can bring positive changes in society. On the other hand, the majority believes that the strong connection between religion and politics puts religion in such a position that it cannot be a real corrective to political abuses and exploitation of individual religious leaders for nationalist purposes (p. 122). Goodwin cites the view of Kuzmič, who claims that religion in Eastern Europe has been used for nationalistic purposes and thus deprived from its universal values (p. 122). Such voices are a challenge to Tuđman's attempt to instrumentalize the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia for the purpose of his populist nationalism. Goodwin cites two different approaches to the problem among evangelical leaders. First, he cites Škrinjarić, who advocates the separation of religion from politics. When religious leaders get involved in politics, they fall into the temptation of manipulating their people for nationalistic purposes. On the other hand, he cites Kuzmič, who speaks about

the "spirit of inclusion". He advocates constructive social and political involvement that will be constructive, build peace and oppose aggressiveness, and national exclusivity (p. 127).

Conclusion of literature review for this research

The analysis of these three works closely specialized in the field of my research helped us understood my research question from different angles. It deepens our understanding of the nature of Croatian populist nationalism in the 1990s, it considers the different attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia towards the changes in Croatia in the 1990s, and especially towards the homeland war; and it brings evangelical and Roman Catholic voices in Bosnia and Herzegovina that challenged populist and nationalist tendencies at the same time in the neighboring country.

Bellamy describes Tuđman's vision of the Croatian state in the early 1990s through a specific interpretation of the grand narrative about the centuries-old dream for Croatian state. Tuđman's vision was the unification of all spectrums of Croatian society and politics, no matter how opposite they were towards each other. He tried to do this through several ways. He tried to confirm the Croatian identity by setting it against the other, in this case the Serbs. He tried to unite Croats in the homeland and those in the diaspora. He also emphasized Croatian sovereignty, used a special approach to citizenship, and emphasized conservative clericalism within the Roman Catholic Church. Bellamy's basic criticism of Tuđman is his inclination towards the right-wing conservative spectrum of Croatian society rather than the anti-fascist one, which he could do as a man who was anti-fascist in II. World War.

In her work, Barunčić informs us about the views of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and its leaders, especially Cardinal Kuharić, and the views of Pope John Paul II., about the organization of the Croatian state in the early 1990s and the military operations undertaken by the Croatian army under the leadership of Tuđman, liberating the area then was

occupied by the Serbian military troops. The Croatian Bishops' Conference, as well as Cardinal Kuharić, at the very beginning supported Tuđman and the HDZ in the realization of Croatia's independence and statehood, believing that it would help in democratizing society and removing the burden of communism. When Tuđman tried to instrumentalize the Roman Catholic Church in order to realize his narrow nationalist views in the sense of Croatia as a state specifically of the Croatian people, and especially after the military operations in 1995, Cardinal Kuharić began to speak more strongly about the need to advocate the freedom and human rights of every citizen of the Republic of Croatia, regardless of his/her nationality. Kuharić emphasized the topic of just peace, which is aimed at the restoration of a complete society. During his visit, the Pope emphasized a certain vision of society in Croatia, which was a challenge to the official policy of Tuđman and the HDZ, as well as to their vision of the Croatian state. This is especially highlighted in pointing out the difference between healthy patriotism and extreme nationalism, pointing out that Croatia is not only a country of the Roman Catholic religion, but also of citizens of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Islamic and Jewish communities. They contributed there for centuries, and the peoples of the Balkans have had a cultural and civilizational exchange, which indicates that they are directed towards each other, and not irreversibly separated, as Tuđman advocated.

The problem that Godwin deals with in his work, and which concerns my research, are different political and social visions of what society in Bosnia and Herzegovina should look like, as well as the state itself. Goodwin states the problem of equating religious and national identity. Ethnic identity cannot come before our identity which comes from sincere faith. When religion is manipulated and reduced to ethnos and culture, it loses its original universal mission. Also, in the Balkans, politicians make artificial distinctions between peoples to emphasize the differences between different peoples. Language and religion are used for these purposes. Such claims by religious leaders, such as Zovkić, Marković, and Oršolić, become a

challenge to Tuđman's populist nationalism, which flirted with the Roman Catholic Church to build a Croatian identity and pit it against another, Serbian one. Against such a narrative, the religious leaders, such as Oršolić, Kuzmič, and Radulović, point to the primacy of common human identity, which is the result of the fact that every human being is created in the image of God. As such, we have a lot more that connects us than separates us. Evangelical leaders from Bosnia and Herzegovina such as Mikulić, Škrinjarić and Krešonja point out that after meeting with Christ, a person receives a new identity in Christ. A person still inherits his nation and culture, but now through Christ he transcends it and is open to others, receiving universal values.

Aspects that these works did not cover, and which are my contribution in this thesis, are the analysis of common Evangelical and Roman Catholic voices specifically in Croatia, which were challenge to populist nationalism in Croatia. We will analyze them in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT: THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIAL VOICES BY CURRENT CROATIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS CHALLENGING POPULIST NATIONALISM IN CROATIA

Introduction to field research project

In this chapter I aim to determine are there common theological voices that counter Croatian popular nationalism by analyzing the views of current Croatian Roman Catholic and Evangelical religious leaders through method of interviews. I want to determine how they understood popular nationalism in Croatia in the context of 1990-ties. Also, I will analyze, from their opinion, what kind of challenges popular nationalism brings to evangelization as one of the basic tasks of the church. In the end I will present how they understood Church's role in reconciliation and peace building in Croatia. The interviews had been done between May to July of 2021, for the purpose of Dmin thesis. For this purpose, I contacted eighteen potential respondents. Nine of them were Roman Catholic priests. Nine of them were evangelical pastors, elders or preachers. Of these, six Roman Catholic priests responded positively to my request. Two of six gave up after I sent them interview questions. In total I collected four interviews and one short commentary by Roman Catholic priests. I collected eight interviews from evangelical pastors. One of them gave up after I sent him questions. Of the five that answered, among the Roman Catholic priests, three are from Dalmatia. Four who did not answer me at all are also from Dalmatia. Among the eight evangelical pastors, two are from Dalmatia. One who did not answer is also from Dalmatia.

Here are the names and brief details from Roman Catholic respondents:

Ivica Jagodić. He is from Vukovar, Slavonia. He is the priest of the parish of St. Filip and Jakov in Vukovar. He is a former guardian of the Franciscan monastery in Vukovar.

Tonči Matulić. He is from the island of Brač, near Split, Dalmatia. He is currently a professor at the Catholic Theological Faculty in Zagreb at the Department of Moral Theology.

Željko Paurić. He is from Nova Gradiška near Slavonski Brod, Slavonia. He served in Osijek for 30 years as the guardian of the Franciscan monastery in Osijek. He is currently in Zemun in the Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Serbia.

Slavko Vranjković. He is from Posuški Gradac near Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, the priest of the Holy Spirit church in Nuštar near Vukovar, Slavonia.

Robert Ćibarić. He is from Dubrovnik, Dalmatia. Currently, the priest in the parish of St. Mihajlo in Dubrovnik.

Here are the names and brief details of Evangelical pastors, elders, or preachers:

Dalibor Kraljik. He is from Jelisavac near Našice, Osijek, Slavonia. He currently works as a lecturer at the Biblical Institute in Zagreb, and he is a member of Pentecostal-Evangelical Church.

Daniel Mackenzie. He is from Dubrovnik. There he serves as a pastor in the Baptist Church.

Dražen Hrženjak. He is from Zagreb. He serves as an elder in Christ International Church in Zagreb.

Ervin Budiselić. He is from Zagreb. He is currently serving in the Church of Christ in Samobor as an elder and as a lecturer at the Bible Institute in Zagreb.

Ico Matulić. He is from the island of Korčula near Split. There he is serving as a pastor at the Pentecostal-Evangelical Church of Korčula.

Nikola Škrinjarić. Lives in Zagreb. He serves as an evangelizer at the Pentecostal-Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia and as a pastor in the Pentecostal-Evangelical Church in Velika Gorica.

Stanko Jambrek. Lives in Zagreb. He serves as a lecturer at the Bible Institute in Zagreb. He is a member of Pentecostal-Evangelical Church.

Vlado Pšenko. He lived in Vukovar. There he served as a pastor at the Church of Christ. He past away in 2022.

These are eight questions from the interview:

1. How would you describe evangelization?

2. How would you describe patriotism?

3. How would you describe popular nationalism in Croatia in the context of the nineties and the transition period that Croatia is still going through?

4. In what way can the mission of the Church be a challenge to popular nationalism in Croatia?

5. What is the role of the Church in God's redemption of people and nations?

6. What is the relationship between Christian identity and national identity? How does this affect minorities in Croatia?

7. Does the Church have a significant role in reconciliation and building peace in Croatia? If so, what does it look like / or should it look like?

8. Can you describe your own involvement in any of these endeavors and the basis for your involvement?

In what follows I bring analysis of these interviews according to the most frequent topics that came up in the answers of the different respondents. I use method of comparison detecting elements that are similar and different among authors I examined. Then I pay special attention to those elements I did not expect in their answers. My Goal was to understand their stand toward popular nationalism and to detect possible similar voices that challenge popular nationalism in Croatia during 1990s.

Common voices describing Patriotism

Here we will analyze what kind of attitude do religious leaders in Croatia have about popular nationalism in Croatia? For most religious leaders from Croatia whom I examined, patriotism is a positive phenomenon, but it should be given the right place on our list of priorities. They point that we should not forget that "Our citizenship is in heaven" according to Philippians 3:20. Homeland in heaven should be our priority. For example, the Roman Catholic theologian Matulić talks about "correct hierarchy of values" (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1), while the evangelical theologian Kraljik talks about "patriotism cannot be first on the list of things we love" (Kraljik 2021, p. 1). Few evangelical theologians find the basis for a positive attitude towards patriotism in the biblical text. For example Ervin Budiselić, an evangelical theologian, believes that Jesus emphasizes his Jewish origin, as the Savior of the world in Revelation 5:5 and 22:16 (Budiselić 2021, p. 1). Daniel Mackenzie, a Baptist pastor from Dubrovnik, holds that biblical texts bring a positive light to our attitude toward patriotism in Romans 9:1-3 and Romans 10:1; Acts 16:9; 1 Timothy 5:8 and 1 Timothy 2:1-3; (MacKenzie 2021, p. 1). This positive attitude towards our nation should be manifested by our positive attitude towards other nations. Vlado Pšenko positively evaluates patriotism which makes room for the other and different and fosters healthy and peaceful coexistence with people of other nationalities (Pšenko 2021, p. 1). Vlado Pšenko, as the pastor of the Church of Christ in Vukovar, builds this attitude on the basis of his many years of efforts for reconciliation in the

city of Vukovar. Namely, for about 10 years, in cooperation with the Church of God in Vukovar, he has been organizing poetic and musical meetings named "Valley of Blessings", which aims to bring Croats and Serbs from Vukovar, as well as members of different religious groups, to a common table, with the aim of building peace and better coexistence in the war-torn city of Vukovar. Tonči Matulić says that a Christian has an obligation to build his national - earthly - citizenship in accordance with the requirements of God's - heavenly - citizenship, because he is aware of the fact that his only true and final homeland is in heaven. In this sense, for a Christian, all nationalism and chauvinism is excluded. He builds his relationship to all temporal and provisional realities on the basis of the Gospel and the imitation of Jesus Christ (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1).

Common voices describing the context of popular nationalism in Croatia in 1990s

As we mentioned, religious leaders in Croatia recognize patriotism as a positive phenomenon, but on the other hand, they are aware of the misuse of national feelings and the negative influence of what we call popular nationalism. Before we talk about it in more detail, it should be noted that different interviewees recognize how popular nationalism in Croatia developed in specific circumstances or contexts. Roman Catholic authors describe "popular nationalism among Croats" in the context of special circumstances that emerged in the early 1990s. For example: Tonči Matulić calls it the "historical process of national emancipation" (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1).

They also notice that in these circumstances special feelings towards the own nation developed which in some cases were also exaggerated. Tonči Matulić calls it "stronger national feelings". However, during such a process, it is important that such feelings remain healthy and not "chauvinistic, expansionist, intolerant and aggressive", Matulić emphasizes (p. 1). Ivica Jagodić says that there were certain people who took advantage of these circumstances for their own benefit. According to Jagodić: "Honesty and justice should be a

characteristic of true patriotism" (Jagodić 2021, p. 2). Slavko Vranjković claims that in socialist Yugoslavia, Croats could not normally express their national feelings. Now, in new circumstances, they have begun to express these feelings in the wrong way, or to quote Vranjković: "They have begun to express excessive emotions toward the state" (Vranjković 2021, p. 2).

Common voices describing the purpose of popular nationalism

Various factors of the political process have the purpose of encouraging popular nationalism. As we saw from Anderson, the basic purpose is to unite all possible factors in the fight against the threat coming from another ethnos. From the specific example of Franjo Tuđman, we saw that he worked to unify the Croatian people in order to build the Croatian nation. In order to achieve this homogeneity, he emphasized the differences between the Croatian and Serbian people. Such tendencies were recognized by our respondents. For example, Dalibor Kraljik claims that popular nationalism was used as a means of cohesion of the Croatian people (Kraljik 2021, p. 1). A similar statement is made by Tonči Matulić in the third question when he says: that during the national emancipation during the 1990s there were stronger national feelings that served to achieve the goal of national emancipation (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1).

Common voices describing the negative effect of popular nationalism

In the section about patriotism, we saw how the respondents share a positive opinion about patriotism. As for popular nationalism, they recognize its various negative influences and consequences. In the following, we will list some factors on which our respondents agree.

Identification of national and religious identity

Many respondents agree that among Croats, as in the wider area of Southeast Europe, there is a phenomenon of identification of religious and national identity. The Evangelical leaders agree unison on this. For example, Ervin Budiselić claims that the rule in Croatia is that if you are a Croat, you are also a Catholic. This is especially visible in rural areas (Budiselić 2021, p. 2). On the other hand, Nikola Škrinjarić shares his personal experience. He declares himself a Croat, but primarily sees his homeland in the heavens. He tries to live in that way. On the other hand, he claims that his surroundings have a lot of problems because of it. He points out that he had great problems when he became an evangelical Christian, explaining to his family that he is still a Croat. It was difficult for the family to separate his belief and religion from his national affiliation. He claims that this is so because in our country it is unthinkable to be a Croat and not be a Catholic. Nikola says: "That identity of Croat, Catholic, believer is actually one thing. That's how observers see it. Then I have to prove that I am a Croat, but that I am not a Catholic. And to look at things differently." (Škrinjarić 2021, p. 2). This identification is also recognized by Ivica Jagodić, a Roman Catholic priest from Vukovar. He notices and describes how nationality and religion are equated in the Balkans, so a Catholic is a Croat and an Orthodox is a Serb. However, according to him these are not good categories. It does not necessarily mean that every Croat is a good Catholic. The right category for him in the first place is to be a good man. And when we are a good man we can be both a good Catholic and a good Croat. We cannot escape the fact that this is the Croatian state. For instance, you cannot claim because you are Croat you can do whatever you want, and that belonging to a certain Croatian party is way to get job. First I need to be a good man, then a good Catholic and then Croat (Jagodić 2021, p. 3). Matulic is quoting Tertullian: "quod est anima in corpore hoc sit christianus nin mundo". He points out that the relationship between national and religious identity can be seen as a

relationship between body and soul. He argues that this is particularly evident in the traditional Christian nations of Europe. Their historical and cultural development cannot be understood without Christianity. Secularization today makes the situation different, but like most European nations, the Croatian people can understand their history and culture in the context of Christianization (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 2). Slavko Vranjković says that the Roman Catholic Church is often described as, I quote: "nationalistic and exclusive towards other religions and nations." He brings an example from his parish of Marinci that shows a different attitude. This town was occupied in the homeland war by Serbs. 24 civilians and 2 war veterans were killed. The Roman Catholic church was destroyed. After the war, they let the Roman Catholic church bells ring when an Orthodox Serb died in Marinci (Vranjković 2021, pp. 2-3).

Use of popular nationalism for the purpose of achieving economic and material gain

The problem of popular nationalism is that people often use it to achieve economic or material gain. Earlier we saw how the authors pointed out that popular nationalism arises in the specific context of national emancipation. In Croatia, especially in the context of the state of war that occurred in the early 1990s, some individuals took advantage of this situation for their own social and material prosperity while at the same time claiming that they had noble national interests. Jagodić, for example, cites examples of people who were in leading positions in the League of Communists, and after the arrival of the parliamentary system and the new pro-national and democratic authorities, they simply changed their shirts and are now self-pronounced greatest Croats. Such people use the word Croat, Croatian, in their slang, and in some of their political fanfare to give the impression that they are the most authentic Croats. Such people frequently created wealth and participated in a criminal milieu under the title of Croat. Honesty and justice should be the characteristic of a true patriot. A true patriot is the one who can contribute the most to his society. Those are people who are fighting for

their small town, for their city, for their homeland (Jagodić 2021, p. 2). A similar phenomenon was noticed by Budiselić, saying: "Unfortunately, in our case, nationalism in political waters is a cover for theft actions" (Budiselić 2021, p. 1).

Popular nationalism fosters a mentality of dominance over other ethnic groups

The next problem of popular nationalism where we are reading common voices is that it encourages the gain of one's own nation to the detriment of other nations. We also indicated this problem in the introduction when we described how Tuđman built the affirmation of the Croatian nation on the distinction from other nations. Such a policy led not only to distinction, but also to favoring one's own people and belittling others. For example, Daniel Mackenzie says, that popular nationalism in Croatia often implied hatred towards other nations, an nefarious willingness to punish sons for the sins of fathers, an unwillingness to forgive (MacKenzie 2021, p. 1). Budiselić says that the mission of the Church inevitably exposes the darkness. Therefore, if we are going to proclaim the Gospel and confront darkness, a person who turns to Christ will also have to turn from his hatred towards other peoples and nations (Budiselić 2021, p. 1).

Flirting with nationalist right

The problem of popular nationalism, as a good number of interviewees point out, is also "flirting with the Ustasha movement" – a movement in Croatia that collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II. For example, Kraljik points out that popular nationalism in the early 1990s was primarily used for the cohesion of the Croatian population, which also had its positive role. However, its content and rhetoric, which often flirted with the Ustasha, are questionable. Such nationalist rhetoric was often inflammatory, xenophobic, hateful, etc., and as such unacceptable (Kraljik 2021, p. 1). Vranjković says that in the 1990s we can see an "explosion" of patriotism because before that it was forbidden to be "national". In this context,

there are also some extreme attempts to revitalize an ideology that historically has not brought anything good, like any other ideology. Looking at nationalism in a positive sense, we can identify it with patriotism or patriotism, and fortunately the majority of Croats are just like that - "Respect your own and others". Nationalism can be viewed in a negative sense as the appearance of people who perhaps could not express patriotism before that period (90s), so now they express exaggerated emotions towards the state (Vranjković 2021, p. 2).

Matulić points out that the Church should speak prophetically regarding the evil aspects of popular nationalism. However, in order to do that, Church needs to question where it stands on that path. If the aforementioned awareness of re-examination and renewal does not reside in the heads of the church leadership, then the Church is reduced to a polished, well-cared-for, pacified civil Church which, as such, can no longer be a true sign, nor a provocation, nor a criticism of anything, least of all nationalist populism. Matulić points out that Pope Francis is a positive example when it comes to attitudes towards minorities and the marginalized, others and others. But that is exactly why Pope Francis is hated in all populist-nationalist circles where local churches, as part of society, are inevitably affected by these evil spirits, Matulić claims (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1).

Challenges of popular nationalism for the mission of the Church

The author of this thesis understands the mission of the Church under the Mission of God in this world according to Ephesians 1:10, which is to bring all reality under Christ. During this process according to Matthew 28:19-20 the Church is called to make disciples of Jesus Christ of all nations by reaching the world and by making disciples of Jesus Christ. In what follows, we will see how the interviewees describe the mission of the Church and different ways in which they use terms like evangelization and discipleship.

Matulić points out that evangelization is not just one part, but the totality of the mission of the Church. Evangelization represents the life-giving force and inspiration of the entire mission of the Church. The Church exists only for the sake of evangelization, if only through evangelization it is possible to enter the community of the saved, which is a visible sign of God's kingdom on earth (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1). Evangelization is one of the basic functions or tasks primarily of the local church, and certainly of the entire mission of the universal Church, says Kraljik. Without evangelization there is no church growth, but essentially there is no Church either. The existence of every local church is in fact the fruit of someone's evangelistic work, and if any modern church does not have evangelization as one of its basic functions, it is in danger of dying out. The Church should continuously (re)evangelize, both non-churched and existing church members (Kraljik 2021, p. 1).

The important documents of both faith communities express the mission of the Church in different ways. For example, the Roman Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the following document:

> The term evangelization has a very rich meaning. In the broad sense, it sums up the Church's entire mission: her whole life consists in accomplishing the traditio Evangelii, the proclamation and handing on of the Gospel, which is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1 :16) and which, in the final essence, is identified with Jesus Christ himself (cf. 1 Cor 1:24). Understood in this way, evangelization is aimed at all of humanity. In any case, to evangelize does not mean simply to teach a doctrine, but to proclaim Jesus Christ by one's words and actions, that is, to make oneself an instrument of his presence and action in the world. (Levada and Amato, 2007).

The document emphasizes that evangelization summarizes the central mission of the Church and is a continuation of Christ's mission on earth.

The Lausanne Movement document "The Cape Town Commitment" understands the mission of the Church as follows:

> We are committed to world mission because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross. (The Lausanne Movement, 2010).

Both faith communities express that the Church has a mission in this world which is a continuation of Christ's work on earth. The Roman Catholic document uses the term evangelization to describe the mission of the Church as the proclamation and delivery of the content of the Gospel to the world. The Evangelical document describes the mission as bringing the whole reality under Christ by reconciliation with God and one another in the power of the cross of Christ.

Roman Catholic Perspective on Evangelization: A Sacramental Approach

Ivica Jagodić describes evangelization through the sacramental system of the Church (Jagodić 2021, p. 1). He describes it from baptism to various activities of the parish with different age groups, as well as in the involvement of the Church in society at the cultural, educational and scientific level (p. 1). Catechesis through human life is the key: kindergarten, religious education at school, in parishes, education before weddings and the like (p. 1). The purpose of evangelization is the salvation of souls, says Vranjković. Every baptized person should participate in evangelization. Unfortunately, today evangelization is seen as an encroachment on a person's secularism. Evangelization is at its core a struggle for the good of others (Vranjković 2021, p. 1).

Evangelical Perspective: The Great Commission

Evangelical interviewees describe the mission of the Church as fulfilling the Great Commission from Matthew 28:19-20 and the process of discipleship. For example, Jambrek says that the Great Commission is the commission to proclaim the gospel, which includes preaching the good news, witnessing from one's own experience and relationship with God, effective love for one's neighbor supported by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the process of discipleship and joining the church. Often the goal of evangelization is the conversion of a person to God, his salvation and faith in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of evangelization or announcing the gospel of Jesus Christ is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who will be like Jesus (Luke 6:40; Romans 8:29), who will serve and live like Jesus (Mark 10:35-45) and do everything what Jesus commanded (cf. Matthew 28,18-20), (Jambrek, 2021, p. 1). Budiselić claims that what we call evangelization is discipleship, because one part of that process of discipleship involves the preaching of the gospel to the unsaved. Unfortunately, we have a division were working with an unsaved person is called "evangelization", and when that same person is converted, then we call working with them "discipleship". He believes this division is wrong because evangelization is an activity within discipleship (Budiselić 2021, p. 1). Nikola Škrinjarić says that evangelization is a life to be lived. Although according to Matthew 28:19-20 it is a general vocation for every Christian even there are people who have a special gift of evangelization (Škrinjarić 2021, p. 1).

What impact does Croatian populist nationalism have on the fundamental mission of the Church?

We noticed how respondents recognize the identification of religious and national identity in the South-Eastern Europe. Kraljik said: "The Christian (Catholic) identity and the national identity of the Croatian people are almost inextricably linked and intertwined, so that being a Croat inevitably means being a Catholic, and vice versa" (Kraljik 2021, pp. 1-2).

Matulić and Vranjković agree that this statement is true, but they not necessary agree with this phenomenon. Matulić says that the historical and cultural development of the Croatian people, as well as other European people, is inextricably linked to Christianity (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 2). Vranjković pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia is often accused of nationalism (Vranjković 2021, pp. 2-3).

What impact such identification make? Kraljik explains that such identification affects the evangelization efforts of evangelical churches, explaining the reason why this is so: "Thus, evangelization by non-Catholic churches is even more difficult, because individuals often perceive religious conversion as abandonment of their Croatian identity, and therefore are no longer inclined to it" (Kraljik 2021, pp. 1-2). He substantiates his claim with following: "That is why is possible to find many members of national minorities in Protestant churches, perhaps more than Croats" (pp. 1-2). Ico Matulić is a bit specific. He says that the Church should gather people of different nationalities into its communities and thus practically work on reconciliation, acceptance, brotherhood, respect, and removal of obstacles to coexistence. He believes that this is the case in many evangelical communities (Matulić, I. 2021, p. 1).

Church's role in reconciliation and peace building in Croatia

Tonči Matulić and Ivica Jagodić emphasize the sacramental dimension of reconciliation that the Church is bringing. Matulić emphasizes that every liturgical celebration is a celebration of forgiveness and reconciliation. Therefore, the Church works on this plan every day. Another question is how much this permeates the believers, how much the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation they carry within themselves. People in Croatia externally want peace, not war. But their inner consciousness and perception has not yet been cleansed of the sin of hatred. There have been positive developments, events, gestures and messages, it is difficult to list them all, but we are still far from a reconciled society, a society that has faced the evils of the past, a society that daily cleanses its memory of the evil spirits of past

hostilities, divisions and atrocities (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 2). Jagodić emphasizes the function of the Word of God during the liturgy. He believes that the Church can play an important role there. Especially in smaller towns. For big cities such as Zagreb, Split, Osijek, Rijeka and other not so much. He claims:

> I think that the Church can significantly help in Vukovar, Ilok, or any other smaller town. Because these people are still active in the Church. They nurture their faith in the Church. They try to live their faith as much as possible. And as much as he listens to the Word of God on Sunday at Holy Mass, if it shapes him, if a person allows himself to be guided and formed by that Word of God, I think that then it can have a great influence. That's what we're here for. (Jagodić 2021, p. 4)

Slavko Vranjković (Vranjković 2021, p. 3) and Dražen Hrženjak (Hrženjak 2021, p. 2) agree that justice is a precondition for peace and reconciliation. Vranjković claims that there are many unjust opinions about the Roman Catholic Church. For example, one of these is the problem of Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac. He was Archbishop of Zagreb during World War II. The Roman Catholic Church in Croatia sees him as its great man, while the Serbian Orthodox Church plays down his activities. Vranjković asks: "What could he have done in bad times without trying?" The NDH authorities warned him, even intended to liquidate him because of his letters that he sent to the clergy to take care of the children from the Jasenovac camp." Vranjković claims that everything he did to save people of other religions and nations is being denied. How speculations and slanders are made. Crimes are crimes no matter who committed them and in whose name. Untruths about that, "inflating the number and other things" do not contribute to coexistence and building peace, forgiveness, and remorse (Vranjković, 2021, p. 3). My intention here is not to question the character and work of Alojzije Stepinac, but rather to state the opinion of Vranjković in the direction of the need to find truth and justice in order to reach a healthy peace and reconciliation. Dražen Hrženjak clarifies this when he says that

the problem of conflict is used partially and deliberately with the aim of maintaining the existing political system. More would be achieved in the process of reconciliation with a fair judiciary and the equality of all citizens (Hrženjak 2021, p. 2). Furthermore, Hrženjak acknowledges the Roman Catholic Cardinal Kuharić for his conciliatory attitudes during the 1990s. As the illustration of his activity he quotes a part of Kuharić's homily:

> No matter how much we were in trouble, no matter how much we were exposed to violence, we as Christians must never fall into the temptation to be infected by such "wisdom". The legal defense of the homeland, family, and freedom is a right and a duty, a moral act, but this defense must never exceed legality to the detriment of the dignity and rights of others; this defense must never turn into hatred and revenge. Therefore, even in the whirlwind of war, let us act with the wisdom that is from above to preserve the dignity of conscience and heart, to confirm the dignity of the just cause we are defending! (Kuharić, 1995, Cardinal Kuharić's sermon on August 24 in Hrastovica near Petrinja)

Dalibor Kraljik claims that the Roman Catholic Church declaratively sends messages of reconciliation with its rhetoric. But its rhetoric also provokes even greater divisions because it fails to resist ideological and national populist influence (Kraljik 2021, p. 2). This thesis is confirmed by Tonči Matulić when he says the following about the Church, quote: "Pope Francis is hated in all populist-nationalist environments in which local churches, as part of society, are inevitably affected by these demons" (Matulić, T 2021, p. 2). Kraljik says that on the other hand, evangelical communities, although modest at first glance, are more active in building peace among ordinary people because of their inter-national composition (Kraljik 2021, p. 2). Nikola Škrinjarić, like Kraljik, says that evangelical communities have a lot of potential in building peace because they are mostly multinational. However, they do not have a greater resonance in society because their activity in society is minor. It is necessary to show

practical love person, to meet his/her needs. This is peace building according to Škrinjarić (Škrinjarić 2021, p. 3).

Analysis of statements made by religious leaders that challenged Croatian populist nationalism

From our analysis on common theological voices among religious leaders that counter Croatian popular nationalism we can discern both commonalities and differences. They all recognize the various negative consequences of popular nationalism. One of these negative influences is the equating of religious and national identity. Roman Catholic authors see this as a problem because it goes against the nature of Roman Catholic theology of universality, while evangelical authors see such a mentality as a barrier to a healthy approach to evangelization. Also, people often use popular nationalism to achieve economic or material gain. The next problem is that it encourages the gain of one's own nation to the detriment of other nations. The problem of popular nationalism in Croatia, as good number of interviews point out is that it often "flirted with the Ustasha movement" – a movement in Croatia that collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II. Also there are some different voices that we noticed in our analysis. For example, Roman Catholic leaders see evangelization in the context of the sacramental system of the Church, which begins with baptism. Evangelical authors see evangelization in the context of the Great Commission, the basic part of which is discipleship. In the context of evangelization, evangelical leaders see a problem in equating religion and nationalism with popular nationalism, because people see conversion to another religion as renouncing their national identity.

In relation to the Church's response to the problem of popular nationalism, we see common voices in the mandate of the Church to speak prophetically to society. The faithful preaching of God's Word is an important element in the challenge of popular nationalism, on which most interviews agree. But in this aspect, we can see a different approach in what it

means to preach God's Word purely. The description varies from liturgical proclamation, proclamation of the gospel of reconciliation, living a life that reflects the gospel. Also in relation to reconciliation, some authors emphasize the church liturgy as a place of reconciliation, while other authors talk about the creation of multi-national church communities as a place where we can have a model of reconciliation that can then be spread to the whole society.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

Review of the thesis and affirmation that the Research Question has been validated

In the final part of this work, regarding our research question: are there common voices that challenged Croatian populist nationalism in the 1990s, we will take into account the different areas of our research and give the answer to our question. Considering the relevant literature in the field of my research, we first defined the nature of Tuđman's populist nationalism during the 1990s. We concluded that there are certain contours of this nationalism. Alex Bellamy describes Tuđman's vision of the Croatian state in the early 1990s through a specific interpretation of the grand narrative about the centuries-old dream for Croatian state. Tuđman's vision was the unification of all spectrums of Croatian society, politics, and ideologies no matter how opposite they were (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 66-68).

He tried to do this through several factors. He tried to confirm the Croatian identity by setting it against the others, in this case the Serbs. He wanted to unite Croats in the homeland and those in the diaspora. He also emphasized Croatian sovereignty, used a constrained approach to citizenship, and emphasized conservative clericalism within the Roman Catholic Church. Bellamy's basic criticism of Tuđman is his inclination towards the right-wing conservative spectrum of Croatian society rather than the anti-fascist one, which he could do as one who was anti-fascist in II. World War (pp. 68-71).

Before entering the analysis of the relevant religious voices of that time, which were a challenge to populist nationalism, we first analyzed Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3 and 13:4-31 as a biblical paradigm of the return of God's people or the Jewish community from Babylon to Jerusalem and building their identity. Then we analyzed the theological documents of two confessions: the Roman Catholic Church: The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) or

specifically the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church: *Lumen Gentium*; and the Evangelical movement: The Cape Town Commitment (CTC) or the specific chapter: *Building the Peace of Christ in Divided and Broken World*.

After that, we analyzed individual religious and theological voices both on the Roman Catholic side and on the Evangelical side. On the Roman Catholic side, we took into account Bishop Antun Škvorčević. He is significant because of his ecumenical activities and relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church. He is a member of the Croatian Episcopal Commission for dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Škvorčević is important because he wrote about the activities of Cardinal Kuharić during the 1990s and the war in Croatia. We also considered the priest Živko Kustić. He was the director of the Catholic Information Agency in 1995. He was a Greek Catholic priest in Croatia who, due to his exposure to Eastern rites and culture, looked at the movements in Croatia from a different perspective. We also analyzed the leading figure of the Roman Catholic Church at that time, Cardinal Franjo Kuharić. He served as a cardinal during the sensitive period of Croatia's transition from the communist system to democracy and during the period of Croatia becoming independent from the SFRY. Also, for the formation of the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia at that time, we considered Pope John Paul II. On the evangelical side in Croatia, we considered Dr. Peter Kuzmič. He was the president of the Protestant Evangelical Council in Croatia from 1991 to 2000. We also considered Dr. Miroslav Volf. He was one of the leading Croatian Protestant theologians of that time who wrote about the Christian faith and nationalism. He received his bachelor's degree in theology at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek. At the very end, we did a field research project in the form of interviews to analyze contemporary religious voices and their attitudes regarding populist nationalism during the 1990s. For this purpose, we conducted a total of 13 interviews between current Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders and theologians.

In our research, we found that the answer to our research question is positive. There are common voices among Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders that challenged the Croatian populist nationalism of the 1990s. In what follows, we will present the results of our research. We will present common voices that were a challenge to Croatian populist nationalism from the 1990s through the presentation of it in church documents of two confessions, the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and the Evangelical movement in Croatia, through the writings and activities of religious leaders who contributed during the 1990s, and taking into account the voices of religious leaders included in our field research project. Also, at the very end, we provide guidelines for further missionary activities of the Church in the Croatian context and society, which arise from our research.

Theological and ecclesiastical similarities challenging populist Croatian nationalism

Similar voices in the documents of both the Evangelical movement and the Roman Catholic Church

In Christ the issue of inter-national hostility is addressed

Both documents, the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) and The Cape Town Commitment (CTC), understand Christ as the one in whom the problem of animosity that exists among nations is addressed. In other words, both documents see the solution to the problem of popular nationalism in Christology. Vatican II in the chapter *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*) emphasizes the theme of the unity of all people. This unity is achieved by Christ who is the light of all nations. This is also the meaning of the title of this chapter "*Lumen Gentium*" or light to the nations (L.G., 1998, p. 93). The CTC, in the chapter *Building the Peace of Christ in a Divided and Broken World*, elaborates about the renewal of nations through the reconciliation accomplished in Christ (CTC, 2012, p. 39). The difference is that the CTC describes renewal through the reconciliation accomplished in

Christ, while the *Lumen Gentium* places emphasis on the unity of the entire human race as given in creation and achieved through the Church.

Lumen Gentium elaborates on the theme of the unity of the whole human race by the reality of creation. All human beings are created in the image of God (L.G., 1998, pp. 93-95). Furthermore, the document mentions the fact of the fall that caused animosity between humans and nations. God's plan is to restore everything in Christ. The restoration of nations is possible in Christ (p. 95). When the document elaborates on renewal in Christ it describes God's plan according to Ephesians 1:4-5 and 10. On the other side CTC starting point are Ephesians chapter 2 where we read about the reconciliation of humans with God and with one another. Therefore, both documents agree that Christ is the center of unity and reconciliation. Lumen Gentium elaborates on unity in Christ, while CTC on reconciliation in Christ. Both documents therefore see the solution to the problem of the fall and the animosity among the nations in Christ. The difference is in the method: unification in the Roman Catholic, reconciliation in the Evangelical.

Some unique contributions

Vatican II describes the way in which unity in Christ is achieved. It comes by the sign or sacrament that is the Church, because the face of Christ is to be seen in the Church. Unity with God is most closely realized through the Church, and thus opens space for the unity of the nations (L.G., 1998, p. 93). The CPC views the Church as an agent of Christ's atonement in the world. The peace of Christ is "fact," but it is also the "task" of the Church. The peace that Christ achieved for us on the cross, between us and God, now needs to be spread between humanity and nations, and that is the task of the Church (CTC, 2012, p. 39).

Vatican II sees in the Eucharist the visible and real unity of the entire human race, because all nations are invited to the same table. Through the Eucharist, the unity of the

faithful to which all nations are called in is presented and actualized. According to the document, this is a visible exercise of the unity of humanity. In the *Lumen Gentium* we read: "Whenever the sacrifice of the cross is performed on the altar, the work of our redemption is performed" (LG, 1998, p. 95). Evangelical perspective is that unity with Christ and all other nations is accomplished by the work of the Spirit, not by human effort. Our reconciliation with God is made by Christ's sacrifice made once and for all (Hebrews 4). Applications of justification occurs through work of the Spirit by faith in Christ and his work (Romans 3 and Hebrews 4). For CTC the unity of the human race is fruit of reconciliation. However, it is not accomplished by the sacrament, but by the work of the Spirit: "Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)" (CTC, 2012, p. 39).

Similar voices among religious leaders in the 1990s

Separation between the Church and politics

One of the topics that dominated the early 1990s among Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders was the separation between the Church and politics. On several occasions, Tuđman tried to win Kuharić and other Roman Catholic church officials for his worldview and political goals. For example, he included some Roman Catholic priests, such as Ante Baković and Tomislav Buka, at the first assembly of the HDZ. He also invited Kuharić himself to the same assembly. However, Kuharić refused such moves, because he did not want to be associated with any political party. Similarly he advised to all other clerics (Akmadža, 2020, pp. 424-425). Volf was of a similar position. He saw the danger in close relations between the Church and politics because the Church could turn from a factor of peace into a generator of conflict. According to Volf, the reason why the Church becomes a generator of conflict is that it is more identified with political power than with its theological essence (Volf 2015, p. 32). The reason why religion goes in this direction is because it is dissatisfied with its status as a witness of the truth in society and wants to use political power

to impose its truth on society (p. 30). The question Volf addresses in the middle of his discussion is what position should religion than take? Should it then avoid public engagement and act privately? Volf sees the solution to this dilemma in the fact that it is wrong to identify public engagement and political identification with a particular party. Volf advocates public engagement of the Church, but not its identification with political party (p. 34).

Dignity, freedom, and human rights for every individual

The next common theme is emphasized on dignity, freedom, and human rights for every individual. Kuharić emphasized this topic from the very beginning of the conflict in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. For example, in his meeting with the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church on August 24, 1991. he pointed out that the Church should defend the freedom of every person and nations (Akmadža, 2020, p. 460). During and after the conflict Kuharić continued to stress this message. At the meeting with Tuđman on January 11, 1994, he appealed to all factors of political power to promote fair relations between people and nations, because only together can they build a just peace (p. 525). Kuharić continued to repeat similar views even after the war operation "Storm", in which the Croatian army liberated large parts of its territory occupied by Serbian armed forces. Kuharić wrote to Tuđman about the need to respect human rights and freedom of all citizens of Croatia, especially in liberated areas (p. 554). On October 25, 1994, in his conversation with the Vice-President of the Croatian Parliament, Vladimir Šeks, Kuharić expressed his concern because Serbian houses and church buildings were being demolished (p. 530). Kuharić criticized every crime, no matter who committed it (p. 524). Kuharić's position on the organization of the Croatian state was expressed in the following sentence that he recorded in his diary, and Akmadža published in his book: "...now that we have a state, we must be smart and organize it so that it is fair for everyone and a guarantee for personal freedoms of all people" (p. 558).

Evangelical authors called for the dignity, freedom and rights of every human being through voices that called for respect for the rights of minorities, and those that are different. Kuzmič pointed to immature transition processes in which, instead of a change from communism to democracy - freedom and human rights for every human being, we experienced a change from a "totalitarian to a narrow tribal mentality" and thus brought into question democratic processes and human rights, especially of vulnerable minorities (Kuzmic 2012, p. 87). Volf elaborated the idea of solidarity with the weaker, but also called for solidarity with the enemy. Christian action in the world toward the other should reflect God's openness for us on the cross because as the Scripture says in Rom. 5:8 God loved us while we were still his enemies (Volf 1996, pp. 22-25).

Attitudes toward military actions in times of war

Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders had similar view on military war operations. Kuharić's position was in accordance with the teaching of the Church or more precisely in accordance with the teaching of Vatican II pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and its attitude towards military operations. He taught that the fight for freedom and peace is justified, that it is a right and a duty, but it must never come at the expense of others. It must go within the framework of the rule of law (Barunčić, 2015, p. 565). Kuzmič understood military operations of the Croatian army in liberating Croatian territories from Serbian occupation were justified. However, he believed Croatian Government was responsible for respecting human rights for all citizens and in promoting and building peace (Kuzmič 2017, p. 14).

They advocate for factors that unite rather than those that divide

Our research showed that most religious leaders indicated, contrary to populist nationalism in Croatia, that the two nations - Croats and Serbs, have more in common than

what divides them. Antun Škvorčević and Živko Kustić highlight the similarities between the Croats and Serbs, which was a direct challenge to Tuđman's thesis on the non-bridgeable differences between the two nations. Antun Škvorčević conveys Kuharić's message from his meeting with the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church so that religious officials should witness those things that connect people, while politicians emphasized differences (Škvorčević, 1996, p. 34). Kuharić emphasized that Roman Catholics and Orthodox believe in the same God. Both are messengers of peace, that is the peace of man with God, and man with fellow man (p. 34).

Kustić pointed out the illogicality of such claims. If every Croat should necessarily also be a Catholic, then every Orthodox believer in Croatia would automatically be prevented from declaring himself a Croat, which narrows the identity matrix of Croatian nation (Kustić, 1994, pp. 42-43). Kustić further points out that it is impossible not to notice the influence of Byzantine civilization on Croatian heritage and culture. According to him, this is for example visible in liturgical singing, church painting, the Glagolitic script, and the unique example that the Roman Catholic Mass could be celebrated in the vernacular even before the Reformation. This, says Kustić, is the direct influence of Eastern, Byzantine Christianity (pp. 42-43). In his meetings with Tuđman, Kuzmič warned that any form of one-mindedness should be avoided. The true character of a mature democracy is a social atmosphere in which people and ideas can compete freely and with the power of arguments (Kuzmič 2017, p. 14).

Some unique contributions

Kuharić criticized the hypocrisy of some politicians in the way they wanted to use the Church for their cheap political points. Here he was referring to the practices of some politicians who attended mass and took the sacraments in order to be seen, but did not meet the religious conditions for it. He called for true conversion, not just political demagoguery (Akmadža, 2020, p. 459). In particular, he commented on Tuđman's visit to the Cathedral on

Christmas 1993. It bothered him that Tuđman's security arbitrarily determined the seating schedule in the cathedral (p. 525). Kuharić did not want Tuđman to use the Church in the direction of his political goals. This is also evident when planning the visit of Pope John Paul II. to Croatia in 1994. Contrary to Tuđman's aspirations, Kuharić emphasized that this visit was primarily pastoral, not state visit (p. 530).

Volf dealt with the question of why religions can enter into inter-ethnic conflicts. His main thesis is that the reason for this is their connection with the political power. According to him, religion is connected to the political power because it is not satisfied with its status as a witness of truth in society. It wants to impose its truth on others through political power (Volf, 2015, pp. 30-32). Volf believes that religions are essentially peaceful. But there is a struggle in them that is manifested either in their identification with political power or with their true peace-making essence (pp. 33-34). This is where his main dilemma is: should then religions be politically active? Volf argues that they should, because there is an essential difference between the public involvement of religions in society and their identification with a particular political option. Religions should therefore guard themselves from identification with a certain political option, but always seek new ways of their public involvement in society (p. 34). In his book *Public Faith*, Volf distinguishes between thick and thin religions. Thick are those that are faithful to their essence and thus enrich societies. Thin are those that identify with society and thus serve neither themselves nor society (p. 34).

One of Volf's powerful contributions is his theology of reconciliation through the image that points to the title of his work *Exclusion and Embrace*. In his work he explains what true reconciliation or "embrace" means. He explains it through the dialectic of embracing truth and justice. Namely, according to Volf, a full embrace can only come when the truth is disclosed and justice is done (Volf, 1996, p. 29). Volf argues that there is a dialectic between grace or embrace and the demand for truth and justice. Grace has priority,

but it is conditioned by accepting or by embrace, and allowing God to bring judgment on the injustice and lies of false prophets (p. 30).

In his activism, Kuzmič emphasized the need for promoting reconciliation between the conflicting parties. There we see his fidelity to documents of evangelical movement such as the CTC in its focus on peacebuilding. Kuzmič emphasized the biblical notion of "Shalom" as a reality that includes more than absence of war, it includes true well-being and coexistence among people regardless of their national or religious affiliation (Kuzmič 2017, p. 14). Kuzmič sees the possibility of realizing the biblical "Shalom" in Jesus Christ, who is the center of human history and the place of reconciliation between nations (p. 14).

Similar voices of current religious leaders from the field research project

In the fourth chapter of this work, we presented field research project that was done in the form of interviews. The goal of this research was to determine the current situation in Croatian society, or specifically among the current leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical movement. We wanted to find are there common voices that challenge popular nationalism in Croatia among current religious leaders. This is the original contribution of this research. In our research, we first looked at how the respondents perceived the usefulness of what they called patriotism or love for the country. Kraljik claims that patriotism is a good when it is first properly prioritized on our list of concerns (Kraljik 2021, p. 1). It makes sense when we recognize that our citizenship in heaven and heavenly values have priority (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1) and it is right when it has room for the other and the different, as Pšenko explains (Pšenko 2021, p. 1). In addition, the respondents acknowledged that there was a context in which popular nationalism in Croatia emerged and the purpose for which it was used, which is what we are exploring here. In Croatia, in the early 1990s, it developed in the context of the "historical process of national emancipation" (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1). In this context, there was a strong awakening of national feelings.

Unfortunately, such feelings were not always directed correctly (Jagodić 2021, p. 2). We indicated that most respondents are aware of different negative effects of popular nationalism regarding the functioning of a modern democracy. In what follows, we will present some common voices of our interviewees that are a challenge to populist nationalism in Croatia.

Equating of religious and national identity

One of these negative influences that our respondents recognize is equating of religious and national identity. Evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders alike recognize this problem. For example, the Roman Catholic priests Ivica Jagodić (Jagodić 2021, p. 3), Slavko Vranjković (Vranjković 2021, p. 2-3) and Tonči Matulić (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 2) and Evangelical leaders Ervin Budiselić (Budiselić 2021, p. 2) and Nikola Škrinjarić (Škrinjarić 2021, p. 2). Roman Catholic authors see this as a problem because it goes against the nature of Roman Catholic theology of universality of the Church, while evangelical authors see such a mentality as a barrier to a healthy approach to evangelization. For example, the Roman Catholic priest Ivica Jagodić says that this problem of identification leads to the illusion that just because someone claims to be a good Croat, he must automatically be a good Catholic. In fact, someone shows his religiosity first and foremost by being a good person, and thus he can also be a good Croat by respecting someone that is different from himself (Jagodić 2021, p. 3). This perspective on the connection between religion and national allegiance directly contradicts Tuđman's populist nationalism. In our analysis of Alex Bellamy's writings, we observed how Tuđman perceived the Roman Catholic Church as a Croatian church that supported the Croatian people during communist Yugoslavia. For this reason, he saw it in the new Croatian state as the cultural and moral fulcrum of the Croatian people and as a tool that could help them distinguish themselves from the Serbian people, who, in his view, were determined by the Serbian Orthodox Church (Bellamy, 2003, p. 159).

Tuđman included several Roman Catholic priests in his party, demonstrating the role of the Church in his vision of the Croatian state. He had similar intentions for Cardinal Kuharić himself, whom he invited to the first solemn assembly of the HDZ, which he strongly refused (Akmadža, 2020, pp. 424-425). Tuđman's position was utterly at odds with the Vatican's, which claimed that the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia inherited universal human values, and it cannot be identified solely with the Croatian people (Bellamy, 2003, p. 159). This attitude was expressed several times not only in the positions of Cardinal Kuharić and other Roman Catholic priests in Croatia, but also in the very visit of Pope John Paul II. to Croatia. In his visit to Zagreb in 1994, which was initially planned as a visit to Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade, Pope criticized, among other things, the use of the Church for narrow nationalist goals, for idolizing the nation and the wrong policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina (p. 161).

Populist nationalism was often used for archiving economic and material gain

The following problem of popular nationalism is that people often use it to achieve economic or material gain. Jagodić described the insincerity of some politicians who took off their communist shirts and put on quasi-democratic ones, with the aim of opportunism and economic gain. For them, the love of economic gain was disguised by extreme nationalism (Jagodić, 2021, p. 2). Budiselić was even more explicit when he said that in our country nationalism is a cover for corruption and theft (Budiselić, 2021, p. 1). Belamy says that Tuđman's favoring of the diaspora with dubious nationalist tendencies was not so much a political program and ideology but material gain. However, he made compromises along the way. To make them feel welcome, he claimed three things: Serbs exaggerated the Ustasha crimes during World War II., which he advocated in his book *Horrors of War*; he claimed that Croatian pro-fascist state during World War II. was a legitimate expression of the aspirations of the Croatian people for their own state, even though it ended badly; and he changed the

names of streets and places to erase the memory of Tito and communism and to rehabilitate some figures with whom the diaspora identified (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 69-70).

Populist nationalism frequently strengthens the identity of one nation while pitting it against other

In this part, authors observed how populist nationalism often built identity of one nation by setting it against other nation. The respondents defined it as hatred towards other. For example, Daniel Mackenzie describes this through the image of the desire to punish sons for the sins of their fathers and the lack of a culture of forgiveness (MacKenzie 2021, p. 1). Budiselić points out that the conversion process in our context includes the rejection of hatred towards other people and nations (Budiselić 2021, p. 1).

Bellamy claims that in the early 1990s, Serbs in Croatia were treated as second-class citizens. He said that this became visible through the specific law on citizenship. Although the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia generally guaranteed national rights to all minorities, this law was used to challenge certain Serbs' right to citizenship (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 73-74). In order to strengthen his position, Tuđman wanted to set the Croats against the Serbs, stressing that their coexistence in the same state is impossible because they are two nations that are essentially different in their culture, history and geography, it is a question of the civilizational difference between East and West (pp. 68-69). Such positions were also opposed by voices in the early nineties, especially by Roman Catholic Bishop Antun Škvorčević, who emphasized the spiritual connection between the two nations (Škvorčević, 1996, p. 34), and priest Živko Kustić, who emphasized that it is impossible to deny the legacy of Byzantine civilization on traditionally Croatian areas (Kustić, 1994, pp. 127-130).

Populist nationalism often "flirted with nationalist right"

The problem of popular nationalism, as a good number of authors point out is that it often "flirted with nationalist right" or with "Ustasha movement" – a movement in Croatia that collaborated with Nazi Germany during World War II. These are strong voices, but we find them in both Evangelical and Roman Catholic authors. For example, Kraljik points out that the rhetoric in the early 1990s often flirted with the Ustasha ideology, was inflammatory, xenophobic, hateful, etc., and as such unacceptable (Kraljik 2021, p. 1). Vranjković further says that due to the earlier suppression of national feelings during the 1990s, there were extreme revivals of an ideology that historically did not bring anything good (Vranjković, 2021, p. 2). Matulić calls such tendencies "evil aspects" or "evil spirits" of popular nationalism (Matulić, T. 2021, p. 1).

Bellamy supports these theses in different ways. To unite all spectrums of Croatian society and realize his idea of an independent and free republic of Croatia, Tuđman did not consider problematic to claim different ideological directions from Croatian history as heritage, such as Strossmayer and Gay, pan-Slavists; Stjepan Radić, a pacifist and trilateralist within the Habsburg Monarchy; Ante Starčević; and Ante Pavelić a pro-fascist (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 66-68). As Bellamy says, the main reason why Tuđman rehabilitated Pavelić, the leader of Croatian pro-fascist movement during World War II, was to gain the support from part of the Croatian diaspora that were family descendants of that regime. To make them feel welcome, he did several things: he claimed that the Serbs were exaggerating the victims of World War II; he claimed that the NDH was a legitimate expression of the desire of the Croatian people for their state even though it ended badly; and changed the names of streets and squares in order to erase the communist memory (pp. 69-70).

Some unique contributions

In the fourth chapter, we pointed out how both confessions saw populist nationalism as a threat to the basic mission of the Church. The Roman Catholic side saw it as a threat to the universal nature of the Church, and the evangelical side as a direct threat to the work of evangelization. Roman Catholic leaders view evangelization within the framework of the Church's sacramental system, which is initiated by baptism. Evangelical authors view evangelization in relation to The Great Commission, of which discipleship is the central component. Because individuals perceive conversion to a different religion as renouncing their national identity, evangelical leaders believe that connecting religion and nationalism is problematic in the context of evangelism.

Effects and methods of countering on own religious community and wider public

At the very end, taking in account our research, we would like to propose some principles regarding attitude the Church and its leaders should take in their encounter with popular nationalism while faithfully fulfilling their mission.

The Church should speak prophetically to society

Tonči Matulić emphasizes that in relation to popular nationalism and society in general, the Church should speak prophetically. However, he detects that the Church today, especially the church leadership, is compromised and not in a position to be a prophetic voice because it is well cared by the same society. If the critical re-examination and renewal does not reside in the heads of the church leadership, then the Church is reduced to a polished, well-cared, pacified civil Church which, as such, can no longer be a true sign, provocation, nor a criticism of anything, least of all nationalist populisms (Matulić, T. 2021, pp. 1-2).

Therefore, for Church to speak prophetically to the society, Volf warns, it must not identify itself with any political project in that same society (Volf 2015, p. 34). This especially refers to the financial support from the same society.

Dalibor Kraljik warns that the Church must be a corrective to any ideological extreme. He says that the mission of the Church in this respect is to be a challenge to popular nationalism. It must not allow popular nationalism to become a challenge to the Church. The Church must be able to resist any excessive patriotic fervor, party preference and cheering, involvement in historical ideological disputes, etc. The Church must be corrective to any ideological extreme, on any side, and preach the gospel and evangelize, not politicize (Kraljik 2021, pp. 1-2).

The Church should preach the Word of God faithfully

Where the Gospel is preached, darkness is revealed, says Budiselić. Its light brings clarity and reveals darkness and animosity towards the other in popular nationalism. A person that turns to Christ will also turn from its hatred towards other people and nations (Budiselić 2021, p. 1). Jagodić notices that there are believers in Church that flirt with right-wing populism and often cheer with *Ustasha* greeting "Ready for home". Jagodić emphasizes that such groups should be educated towards a healthy society. He sees such believers as an exception in the Church, but still as an opportunity for the Church to positively influence and direct towards a healthy society through proclamation and implementation of the Word of God (Jagodić 2021, p. 3). Škrinjarić also gives more details in explaining what it means to preach the Gospel in the context of popular nationalism. The Gospel is first and foremost the work of the Holy Spirit at work in particular situations. He cites his concrete example while distributing humanitarian aid to various nationalities in Mostar and experiencing opposition and threats because of it. The debate with the nationalists is lost in advance because they always "have more arguments", says Škrinjarić. But when we show grace in action, then the

power of the Gospel breaks obstacles and barriers (Škrinjarić 2021, pp. 1-2). The Church, therefore, cannot only preach the Gospel but practically live it by living a life of grace and love for all people and nationalities. Mackenzie also adds his interpretation of what it means to proclaim the Gospel in the context of popular nationalism. I quote: "The Church can challenge popular nationalism by publicly preaching the teachings of Scripture on repentance, faith, forgiveness, and love and respect for all people, even enemies" (MacKenzie 2021, p. 1).

The respondents agree that if we faithfully preach and live the Gospel, we can expose the negative influences of popular nationalism and raise people's awareness for the values of life in openness for those that are different from us. Such an attitude towards the Word of God is costly because it demands repentance and a change of worldview. It is also impossible to preach the Word of God purely if such preaching is not accompanied by a life lived in active grace and love for one's neighbor.

The Church should emphasize the dignity, rights, and freedom for every human person

One of the fundamental ways in which religious leaders in Croatia provoked popular nationalism was to emphasize the dignity and freedom for every human person, regardless of their national or religious affiliation. Kuharić emphasized this principle from the beginning of events in the 1990s. He pointed this out in his meeting with Patriarch Pavle in Slavonski Brod on August 24, 1991, when he pointed out that the Church must be the defender of justice and the protector of the freedom of every nation and person (Akmadža, 2020, p. 460). On the meeting with Tuđman on January 11, 1994, he asked all political factors to promote just relations between people and nations, because only together they can build a just peace (p. 525). Also, after the military operations of the Croatian Army in liberating the occupied territory, Kuharić wrote to Tuđman asking him to respect the human rights and freedoms of all citizens in the liberated territories, regardless of their nationality (p. 554).

The theme of the pluralization of Croatian society, with an emphasis on building a society of dignity for every human person where people and ideas can compete with the power of arguments, not force, was Kuzmič's emphasis. He shared these thoughts during the meeting with Tuđman in 1996 (Kuzmič 2017, pp. 13-14). It was in this area that Kuzmič saw the role of the small but vibrant evangelical community as a bridge between Croatia and Western society where human rights and freedoms are respected. The Church should promote a healthy humanism where all human beings have same dignity because they are created in the image of God. Also, it would point that though all are violated by sin, they are also in position to receive grace and transformation because of the sacrifice of Christ.

The Church needs to witness to society by nurturing multiethnic Christian communities

Ico Matulić says that the Church should gather people from different nationalities into same communities and thus practically live a life of reconciliation, acceptance, brotherhood, respect and removal of obstacles for coexistence. He believes that this is the case in many evangelical communities of faith (Matulić, I. 2021, p. 1). Željko Paurić, citing Galatians 3:26-29 and Ephesians 2:13-18, explains that in these passages Paul sees Christ's followers as a community of renewed humanity. The resurrected Christ reconciles converts from paganism and Judaism and incorporates them into the same body of Christ. So, this community lives in peace with God and with each other. He calls him "our peace" because in the Church as the body of Christ, baptized people of different cultures and nationalities live together without having to renounce their national and cultural identity (Paurić, 2021, p. 1). The basic idea is that with its existence the Church can witness to society God's model of existence in which there is room for people from all nations, tribes and languages according to Christ and his peace.

The Church should promote a healthy relationship between religion and politics

Church officials should develop a culture of healthy relations between religion and politics. This was a challenge not only in Croatia, but throughout the Balkans during the 1990s. Namely, politicians tried to win over religious officials for their party and political options, seeing what kind of authority religious institutions have among the people. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Kuharić refused any involvement of church officials in politics. For example, when Tuđman invited him to HDZ party gatherings, or when he visited him with party officials, Kuharić refused such relationships because he claimed that it was not appropriate for a church official to identify with any party option (Akmadža, 2020, pp. 424 - 425).

Some authors have pointed out the principles by which the Church can set itself up in a healthy manner with regard to this problem. Volf pointed out that politics and religion are equally tempted to identify with each other because they see in the other the possibility of achieving their goals. Not only politicians see the benefit in identifying with religion. Religious leaders often see this as well. According to Volf, they do this when they are not satisfied with their status in society as witnesses of the truth, but want to use political power to impose their truth on others with the power of politics (Volf, 2015, p. 30).

Volf further asks: how then should religion be positioned in relation to politics? He sees a difference between the identification of religion with a particular political option and public involvement in society. According to him, religion should avoid any identification with a political option, but should be publicly present (p. 34). Accordingly, the task of the Church is to avoid any type of political abuse, regardless of whether it comes from politics or the church. On the other hand, one should look for new ways of being present in society, especially in culture, in the social field, in education, but also in creative ways to challenge

politics and politicians to foster a society of healthy relationships, human rights, freedom and creative ideas.

The Church should promote those elements that connect, as opposed to those that separate

In our research, we have seen how one of the basic threats of popular nationalism is the construction of national identity by setting it against others and emphasizing the differences that divide. We saw this in the way Tuđman tried to unite the Croatian national corps by positioning it against the Serbs. For this reason, he pointed out that Croats differ from Serbs in terms of culture, history, and geography. He pointed out that it was a civilizational difference between East and West, which made Yugoslavia as a common state an impossible illusion (Bellamy, 2003, pp. 68-69).

Such ideas and mentality were opposed by numerous church leaders, among whom Bishop Antun Škvorčević and the Roman Catholic priest Živko Kustić were foremost. Škvorčević did this in his article: *Peacemaking and ecumenical efforts of church leaders during the Homeland War*, in which among else he wrote about activities of Cardinal Kuharić during the 1990s. Describing the meeting between Cardinal Kuharić and Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which took place in 1991 in Srijemski Karlovci, May 7, he highlighted Kuharić's advice for church leaders to focus on what unites two nations rather than what divides as politicians are likely to emphasize (Škvorčević, 1996, p. 33). On the other hand, Kustić consistently underlined the Eastern Byzantine legacy of the Croatian people and the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia. Additionally, he stressed the absurdity of linking national identity with religious identity. If our religious identity also determined our national identity, not a single Orthodox individual could identify as a Croat (Kustić, 1994, pp. 42-43). The Church's responsibility is to continually draw attention to the commonalities among people, which may be found in the fact that we were all made in God's image. We will

be able to understand and value our differences more fully when we correctly stress the shared identity that unites us.

The Church should engage in social dialogue that promotes inclusive identity markers

Two guiding themes for our topic are the focus of the section from Nehemiah 12:44 to verses 13:1-3 and verses 13:4–31. The first one, found in Nehemiah 12:44 to 13:1-3, is about "establishing the limits" in order to preserve a community's identity; the second, found in Nehemiah 13:4–31, is about the leaders Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah's failure or partial success in reviving the Jewish community.We have discovered that while it is normal to set some boundaries that help shape a society as a country develops its identity, it is unjustifiable when these boundaries are constructed in a way that excludes others. The role of the Church is to participate in societal discourse about finding innovative ways to support those identity markers that reaffirm a particular community, but in a way that does not put them in opposition to other cultures and peoples, but rather that makes them accessible to them and enriches them. Nehemiah 13:4–31's lesson on Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah's failure and partial accomplishment in rebuilding the Jewish community teaches the Church and its leaders lesson on humility. Their Lord has commissioned them to serve as the social yeast that can transform the society in which they live. However, they must keep away from any manifestation of "messianic syndrome," and think that they are able to do the work alone. They are obligated to act faithfully in the places and roles that God has given them in the course of his providence as they wait for his return, when everything will be put in right order. He is the Bright and Morning star (Revelation 22:16) that heralds the day when the nations will walk in his light and the kings of the earth will bring their glory to him (Revelation 21:24).

The Church should promote peace through the cross of Christ

Christian communities should be dedicated to foster Christ's peace as they deal with various types of extremism. As Kuzmič notes, the goal of establishing Christ's peace is to achieve biblical shalom, which denotes the wellbeing and quality of life that come from having a good relationship with both God and one's neighbor (Kuzmič, 2017, p. 14). Therefore, in order to promote peace, Christian communities should work to foster correct relationships amongst nations, whereby they not only respect one another but also value one another's cultures and ways of life. Volf outlined the prerequisites that must be satisfied in order to create this type of peace. In his work *Exclusion and Embrace*, he made the argument that mercy and embrace cannot be genuine and lasting if justice and truth are not revealed and upheld (Volf, 1996, p. 29). Due to their openness to different ethnic groups, Christian communities have opportunity—and duty—to draw attention to the fact that unilateral affirmations of justice and truth will never bring enduring peace. Reality of crucifixion of Christ shows that every person is a sinner before God without exception. However, every person can find grace and life with God and neighbor under the cross of Christ.

REFERENCES

Akmadža, M. (2020). *Franjo Kuharić - Kardinal i vlast* [Franjo Kuharić, Cardinal and power]. Zagreb: Profil.

Archdiocese of Zagreb. (1995). *Službeno glasilo Zagrebačke nadbiskupije* [Official Gazette of the Archdiocese of Zagreb], no. 1. Zagreb.

Archdiocese of Zagreb. (1995). *Službeno glasilo Zagrebačke nadbiskupije* [Official Gazette of the Archdiocese of Zagreb], no. 4. Zagreb.

Badurina, S. (1999). *Glas za čovjeka (Propovijedi iz 1988.-1996.)* [Voice for Man (Sermons 1988 - 1996)]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Barunčić, P. J. (2014). *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i Domovinski rat 1991. – 1995.: stavovi, djelovanje i stradanja* [The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991 - 1995: Attitudes, Action, and Suffering]. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu.

Barunčić, P. J. (2015). Stavovi i djelovanje Katoličke crkve u Hrvatskoj tijekom 1995. (u vrijeme i nakon hrvatskih oslobodilačkih operacija „Bljesak" i „Oluja") [Attitudes and activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia during 1995 (During and after the Croatian liberation war Operation „Flash" and „Storm")]. *Journal for Contemporary History*, no. 3., 563-578.

Bekić, J. (2016). Između demosa i etnosa – koncept hrvatske nacije u govorima predsjednika Franje Tuđmana [Between demos and ethnos - the concept of the Croatian nation in the speeches of President Franjo Tuđman]. *Journal for Contemporary History*, no. 1., 7-32.

Bellamy, A. J. (2003). *The formation of Croatian national identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Blažević, V. (1993). *Katolička crkva u Hrvata u službi mira i stvaranja samostalne Hrvatske* [The Catholic Church Among the Croats in the Service of Peace and the Creation of an Independent Croatia]. Kršćanska sadašnjost: Zagreb.

Block, D. I. (1986). Nations. In Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Ed), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (pp. 492-496). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Budiselić, E. (2021, June 09. ZG. 04). Personal communication [email].

Catholic news agency. (1994). *Informativna katolička agencija Bilten - Vijesti i dokumenti* [Catholic news agency Bulletin - News and documents]. no. 36/94, 14 September 1994, 15-28. Zagreb: IKA.

Catholic news agency. (1995). *Informativna katolička agencija Bilten - Vijesti i dokumenti* [Catholic news agency Bulletin - News and documents]. Zagreb: IKA.

Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia. (2011). Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011. Retrieved December 9, 2022, from https://www.dzs.hr/hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/h01_01_12/h01_01_12.htmlb

Christensen, D. L. (1992). Nations. In David Noel Freedman (Ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume 4 K-N (pp. 1037-1049). New York: Doubleday.

Ćibarić, R. (2021, June 30. DU. 08). Personal communication [email].

Cohen, L. J. et al. (1995). *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*. Oxford: Westview, 2nd edition. In Bellamy, A. J. (2003). *The formation of Croatian national identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1995). Izjava u povodu oslobođenja okupiranih područja Hrvatske [Statement on the occasion of the liberation of the occupied

territories of Croatia]. In Barunčić, P. J. (2014). Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i Domovinski rat 1991. –1995.: stavovi, djelovanje i stradanja [The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991 - 1995: Attitudes, Action, and Suffering]. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu.

Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1995). Poziv za sudjelovanje u Velikoj obnovi [Invitation to Participate in the Great Reconstruction]. Glas Koncila, 13/20. 8. In Barunčić, P. J. (2015). Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i Domovinski rat 1991. –1995.: stavovi, djelovanje i stradanja [The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991-1995: attitudes, actions and suffering]. *Contemporary History Journal*, br. 3., 563.-578.

Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1995). Priopćenje nakon susreta Svetoga Oca s biskupima iz Bosne i Hercegovine, Hrvatske, Jugoslavije, Makedonije i Slovenije (17. listopada 1995.) [Announcement after the meeting of the Holy Father with bishops from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Macedonia and Slovenia (October 17, 1995)]. In Blažević, V. (2009). *Katolička crkva u Hrvata u službi mira i stvaranja samostalne Hrvatske* [The Catholic Church Among the Croats in the Service of Peace and the Creation of Independent Croatia] (424-425). Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1995). Službene vijesti Hrvatske biskupske konferencije 1., br. 1: 28-29 [Official Gazette of the Croatian Bishops' Conference 1., no. 1: 28-29]. In Barunčić, P. J. (2015). Stavovi i djelovanje Katoličke crkve u Hrvatskoj tijekom 1995. (u vrijeme i nakon hrvatskih oslobodilačkih operacija „Bljesak" i „Oluja") [Attitudes and activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia during 1995 (During and after the Croatian liberation war Operation „Flash" and „Storm")]. *Contemporary History Journal*, br. 3., 563.-578.

Croatian Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1995). Službene vijesti Hrvatske biskupske konferencije 1., 1: 30-31 [Official Gazette of the Croatian Bishops' Conference 1., no. 1: 30-31]. In Barunčić, P. J. (2014). Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i Domovinski rat 1991. – 1995.: stavovi, djelovanje i stradanja [The Catholic Church in Croatia and the Homeland War 1991 - 1995: Attitudes, Action, and Suffering]. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 575.

Croatian Helsinki Human Rights Watch (1995). Građanska i politička prava u Hrvatskoj [Civil and Political Rights in Croatia]. In Bellamy, A. J. (2003). *The formation of Croatian national identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Davies, G. F. (1999). *Berit Olam, Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry, Ezra & Nehemiah*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.

Fensham, F. C. (1982). *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans.

Geertz, C. (1963). The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and civil politics in the

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Goodwin, S.R. (2006). *Fractured Land, Healing Nations*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.

Grosby, S. (2016). National Identity, Nationalism, and the Catholic Church. In Oxford Handbooks Online. Retrieved December 23, 2020: https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935420.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935420-e-61

Hamlin. E. J. (1991). Nations. In George Arthur Buttrick (Ed), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Hrženjak, D. (2021, June 21. ZG. 03). Personal communication [email].

Jagodić, I. (2021, June 02. VU. 06). Personal communication [Zoom].

Jakelić, S. (2010). *Collectivistic Religions*. Burlington: Ashgate.

Jambrek, S. (1997). *Evanđeoski pokret* [Evangelical movement]. Zagreb: Protestant-Evangelical Council in Croatia.

Jambrek, S. (2021 June 08. ZG. 10). Personal communication [email].

Jambrek. S. (2003). *Crkve reformacijske baštine u Hrvatskoj* [Churches of the Reformation Heritage]. Zagreb: Bogoslovni Institut.

James, P. (1997). *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community*. London: Sage.

John Paul II. (1991). Pismo Svetog Oca kardinalu Kuhariću i hrvatskim biskupima [Letter of the Holy Father to Cardinal Kuharić and the Croatian bishops]. In Blažević, V. (2009). *Katolička crkva u Hrvata u službi mira i stvaranja samostalne Hrvatske* [The Catholic Church Among the Croats in the Service of Peace and the Creation of Independent Croatia] (301-303). Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

John Paul II. (1993). *Molimo Boga da promijeni srca onih koji su htjeli rat* [We ask God to change the hearts of those who wanted war]. In Blažević, V. (2009). *Katolička crkva u Hrvata u službi mira i stvaranja samostalne Hrvatske* [The Catholic Church Among the Croats in the Service of Peace and the Creation of Independent Croatia] (326-328). Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

John Paul II. (1994). *Govori u Hrvatskoj 10. i 11. rujna 1994* [Speeches in Croatia on September 10 and 11, 1994]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Klein, R. W. (1999). *The New Interpreters's Bible / A Commentary in Twelve Volumes / Volume III, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Tobit, Judith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Knežević, D. and Godić, D. (2021). Dr Franjo Tuđman i 1989.: Početak političkog puta prema samostalnoj Hrvatskoj [Dr Franjo Tuđman and 1989: The beginning of the political path towards an independent Croatia]. *Review of Croatian History* 17/2021, no. 1, 9-40.

Kraljik, D. (2021, June 17. OS. 01). Personal communication [email].

Kuharić, F. (1990). *Poruke sa Stepinčeva groba* [Messages from Stepinc's grave]. Zagreb: Glas Koncila.

Kuharić, F. (1994). *Mir je djelo pravde: Poruke, propovijedi i apeli 1988.-94.* [Peace is the Work of Justice: Messages, Sermons and Appeals 1988-94]. Zagreb: Glas Koncila.

Kuharić, F. (1995). Propovijed kardinala Kuharića 24. kolovoza u Hrastovici kod Petrinje [Cardinal Kuharić's sermon on August 24 in Hrastovica near Petrinja]. Retrieved August 29, 2022, from https://hkm.hr/vijesti/domovina/propovijed-kardinala-kuharica-koja-je-probudila-savjest-mnogih/

Kuharić, F. (1996). Kršćanin u Hrvatskoj [A Christian in Croatia]. *Bogoslovska smotra*, 66, 169-565.

Kuharić, F. (1996). *Principi dobra* [Principles of good]. Zagreb: Glas Koncila.

Kuharić, F. (1997). *Kako je lijep čist naraštaj* [What a beautiful is a pure generation]. Zagreb: Hrvatski katolički zbor "Mi".

Kustić, Ž. (1974). *Mali ključ Biblije* [The Little Key of the Bible]. Zagreb: Nadbiskupski duhovni stol - Glas Koncila.

Kustić, Ž. (1976). *Mali ključ povijesti Crkve u Hrvata* [A small key to the history of the Church in Croatia]. Zagreb: Nadbiskupski duhovni stol: Glas Koncila.

Kustić, Ž. (1987). *Velike religije svijeta* [Great religions of the world]. Zagreb: Glas Koncila.

Kustić, Ž. (1990). *Bog za odrasle: suvremena informacija o kršćanstvu* [God for Adults: Contemporary Information on Christianity]. Zagreb: Nadbiskupski duhovni stol - Glas Koncila.

Kustić, Ž. (1991). *Stepinčevo doba* [Stepinac's era]. Zagreb: Studio Promotion.

Kustić, Ž., (1995). *Hrvatska mit li misterij* [Croatia Myth or Mystery]. Zagreb: Minerva.

Kuzmič, P. (2012). Christianity in Eastern Europe. In Charles E. Farhadian (Ed.), *Introducing World Christianity*, First Edition. New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing.

Kuzmič, P. (2012). Dilemmas and challenges for theology in post-communist Eastern Europe. In Ross, C. (Ed.). Mission in Context : Exploration Inspired by J. Andrew Kirk (pp. 217-227). Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Kuzmič, P. (2017). Vrijeme i vječnost. Etika, politika, religija [Time and Eternity, Ethics, Politics and Religion]. Osijek: Matica hrvatska.

Kuzmič, P. (2018). *Za bolji život i pravedniji svijet* [For a better life and a fairer world]. Zagreb & Sarajevo: Synopsis.

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism. (2012). *The Cape Town Commitment*. Zagreb: Protestant-Evangelical Council in Croatia.

Lausanne Movement. (2004). Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 50 / The Impact on Global Mission of Religious Nationalism and 9/11 Realities (LOP 50). Retrieved March 19,

2020: https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/the-impact-on-global-mission-of-religious-nationalism-and-911-realities-lop-50

Lausanne Movement. (2010). The Cape Town Commitment - A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action, 10. We love the mission of God. Retrieved August 29, 2022, from https://lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment

Levada, W. and Amato, A. (2007). Congregation for the doctrine of the faith, Doctrinal note, On some aspects of evangelization. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20071203_nota-evangelizzazione_en.html

Liverani, M. (1992). Nationality and Political Identity. In David Noel Freedman (Ed.), The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Volume 4 K-N (pp. 1031-1037). New York: Doubleday.

MacKenzie, D. (2021, July 01. DU. 02). Personal communication [email].

Mackie, T. (2018). Overlooked: Ezra-Nehemiah. Not the Leadership Lessons You Expect. Bible Project Bible Study. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from https://bibleproject.com/blog/overlooked-ezra-nehemiah/

Maroney, E. (2016). Crisis, change and conversion: Forty years of conversion among Croatian Baptists. *KAIROS - Evangelical Journal of Theology*, Vol. X, no. 1, p. 61-84.

Matulić, I. (2021 June 21. ST. 05). Personal communication [email].

Matulić, T. (2021, May 30. ST. 11). Personal communication [email].

McElroy, R. W. (2017). What is the Catholic response to the rise of nationalism? Retrieved February 26, 2020: https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/01/24/what-catholic-response-rise-nationalism

Mihanović, N. et al. (2010). *Tuđmanova baština* [Tuđman's heritage]. Detecta: Zagreb. In (2022). *Dr. Franjo Tuđman, the first Croatian president. Biography*. Retrieved August 20, 2022, from https://www.tudjman.hr/zivotopis

Myers, J. M. (1965). *Ezra & Nehemiah, Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. New York: The Anchor Bible. In C. Geertz (Eds.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Africa and Asia* (pp. 109-111). New York: Free Press.

Özkırımlı, U. (2000). *Theories of Nationalism*. New York: St.Martin's Press.

Paul VI. (1965). *Dogmatska konstitucija o Crkvi: Lumen gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium]. In *Dokumenti*, Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Paul VI. (1965). *Pastoralna konstitucija o Crkvi u suvremenom svijetu: Gaudium et spes* [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world: Gaudium et spes]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Paul VI. (1965). *Pastoralna konstitucija o Crkvi u suvremenom svijetu: Gaudium et spes* [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world: Gaudium et spes]. In Blažević, V. (2009). *The Catholic Church Among the Croats in the Service of Peace and the Creation of Independent Croatia* (398-401). Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Paul VI. (1967). Populorum Progressio, On the Development of Peoples. Retrieved March 20, 2020: http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html

Paurić, Ž. (2021, July 19. SB. 13). Personal communication [email].

Pavičić, D. (1995). *Razgovori s kardinalom* [Conversations with the cardinal]. Zagreb, Teovizija.

Protestant Evangelical Council in Croatia. (2022). Protestant Evangelical Council in Croatia. Retrieved July 12, 2022, from https://pev.com.hr/pev-a-hr/

Pšenko, V. (2021 June 03. VU. 12). Personal communication [email].

Purified texts of the law. (2022). Ustav Republike Hrvatske [Constitution of the Republic of Croatia]. Retrieved August 20, 2022, from https://www.zakon.hr/z/94/Ustav-Republike-Hrvatske

Rehn, E. et al. (1997). Report on the situation of human rights in the Republic of Croatia. United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/CN.4/1998/14, October 1997. In Bellamy, A. J. (2003). *The formation of Croatian national identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Šeks, V. (2017). *Državni udar: Kako su Manolić i Mesić rušili Tuđmana i hrvatsku politiku prema Bosni i Hercegovini: 1. dio* [Coup d'état: How Manolić and Mesić destroyed Tuđman and Croatia policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina: part 1.] *Zagreb: Večernji list.*

Škrinjarić, N. (2021 June 14. ZG. 07). Personal communication [Zoom].

Škvorčević, A. (1995). *Zagrebačka biskupija i Zagreb: 1094 -1994: zbornik u čast kardinala Franje Kuharića* [Diocese of Zagreb and Zagreb: 1094 -1994: collection in honor of Cardinal Franjo Kuharić]. Zagreb: Nadbiskupija zagrebačka & Katolički bogoslovni fakultet Sveučilišta.

Škvorčević, A. (1996). Mirotvorna i ekumenska nastojanja crkvenih poglavara u Domovinskom ratu [Peacemaking and ecumenical efforts of church leaders during the homeland war]. In Živković, I. (Ed.), *Wounded Church in Croatia*. Zagreb: Targa.

Škvorčević, A. (1996). *Umjesto Krista zaklinjemo: dajte, pomirite se s Bogom* [Instead of Christ, we ask: be reconciled to God]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost: Vijeće za ekumenizam i dijalog HBK.

Škvorčević, A., & Kuharić, F. (1976). *Trinaest stoljeća kršćanstva u Hrvata* [Thirteen centuries of Christianity in Croats]. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Smith, A. (2003). *Nationalism and Modernism, A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Smith, A. D. (2000). Theories of nationalism. Alternative models of nation formation. In Leifer, M. (Ed.), *Asian Nationalism* (pp. 20). London: Imprint Routledge.

Smith, A. D. (2009). *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism. A cultural approach*. New York: Routledge.

Tuđman, F. (1990). *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti* [Horrors of war: historical reality and philosophy]. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice Hrvatske.

Tuđman, F. (1990). *Izabrana djela Franje Tuđmana (Knj. I. - III.: Velike ideje i mali narodi, Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi, Državnost naroda, Ključ mira Europe, Bespuća povijesne zbilje* [Selected works of Franjo Tuđman (Books I. - III.: Great ideas and small nations, The national question in contemporary Europe, The statehood of nations, The key to the peace of Europe, Horrors of war: historical reality and philosophy]. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice Hrvatske.

Tuđman, F. (1993). *Hrvatska u monarhističkoj Jugoslaviji: 1918.-1941* [Croatia in monarchist Yugoslavia: 1918-1941]. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada.

Tuđman, F. (1995). *S vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku* [With faith in an independent Croatia]. Zagreb: Narodne novine.

Tuđman, F. (1995). *S vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku* [With faith in an independent Croatia]. Zagreb: Narodne novine.

Tuđman, F. (1997). *Horrors of war: historical reality and philosophy*. New York: M. Evans.

Tuđman, F. (1998). *HDZ – Stožerna stranka demokratske Hrvatske* [HDZ – Pivotal party of democratic Croatia]. Zagreb: Izvršni odbor HDZ-a Zagreb.

Tuđman, F. (1998). *Zna se. HDZ u borbi za samostalnost Hrvatske, knj. I. (Zagreb, 1992), sv. II. (Zagreb, 1993), sv. III. (Zagreb, 1995), sv. IV. (Zagreb, 1998).* [It is known. HDZ in the fight for the independence of Croatia, vol. I. (Zagreb, 1992), vol. II. (Zagreb, 1993), vol. III. (Zagreb, 1995), vol. IV. (Zagreb, 1998)]. Zagreb: Izvršni odbor HDZ-a Zagreb.

Tuđman. F. (1995). *Usudbene povjestice* [Fated histories]. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada.

Volf, M, (2016). *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Volf, M. (1996). *Exclusion And Embrace: A Theological Exploration Of Identity, Otherness And Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Volf, M. (2005). *Free of Charge*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.

Volf, M. (2006). *The End of Memory. Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. Grand Rapids, Michigan & Cambridge, U. K.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

Volf, M. (2011). *A Public Faith*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press.

Volf, M. (2015). Religions, Identities, and Conflicts. *Concilium, Religion and Identity in Post-Conflict Societies*. Year LI, No. 1, 18.

Volf, M. (2022). The Grace of Not Remembering: Painful Memories and Their Theological Implications. In Grozdanov, Z. (Ed.), Balkan Contextual Theology: An Introduction (pp. 79-91). London-New York: Routledge.

Vranjković, S. (2021, June 15. MO. 09). Personal communication [email].

Williamson, H.G.M. (1985). *Word Biblical Commentary/Ezra, Nehemiah*. Waco, Texas: Word Books.

Wuench, H. G. (2021). The structure of Ezra-Nehemiah as a literary unit. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 42 (1), a2317. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v42i1.2317

Yamauchi, E.M. (1980). The reverse order of Ezra / Nehemiah reconsidered. *Themelios* 5 (3), 7–13.

Živković, I. (1996). *Ranjena Crkva u Hrvatskoj* [Wounded Church in Croatia]. Zagreb: Hrvatska biskupska konferencija.

Živković, I. (1997). *Raspeta Crkva u Bosni i Hercegovini: uništavanje katoličkih sakralnih objekata u Bosni i Hercegovini (1991.-1996.)* [The Crucified Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Destruction of Catholic Sacred Buildings in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991-1996)]. Sarajevo: Croatian Heritage Foundation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Žižić, J. (2020). Franjo Tuđman, Kršćanska demokracija i Hrvatska demokratska zajednica [Franjo Tuđman, Christian Democracy and the Croatian Democratic Community]. *Obnovljeni Život*, 75 (4), 475–492.

VITA

David Kovačević was born in Vinkovci, Croatia, on October 13, 1985. He earned a bachelor's degree in theology from the Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia, in 2008 and a master in theology from the same seminary in 2011. David's doctoral work began at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2014, and his anticipated graduation date is January 2023. David currently serves as the Deacon in the Church of God in Croatia. He is founder of "Stand up and walk" - ministry for socially marginalized in the city of Zagreb. He also serves as the lecturer and Student Dean at Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia. David and his wife, Arnela, have been married for three years. They have one child, Ella Grace, and another in expectation.